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THE

CALVARY PULPIT.

CHRIST, AND HIM CRUCIFIED.

BY

ROBERT S. MACARTHUR.

FUNK & WAGNALLS.

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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
Paul's Determination at Corinth	7
The Crude Cake	28
Zealous Service for God	43
The Seven Overcometh—I	59
The Seven Overcometh—II	71
Christ a Living Stone	83
Not Weary in Well-Doing	93
Sad Sowing—Glad Reaping	103
Victorious Young Men	116
A Comprehensive Prayer	129
Our Lord's Mysterious Sorrow	140
The Promise of the Comforter	150
Character and Destiny	161
Future Punishment—What?	171
Bands of Love	184
Bearing One Another's Burdens	197
Human Ministry a Divine Gift	210
Marvellous Kindness in a Strong City	222
The Place Too Strait	236
Reasons for Public Worship	251
Voiceful Stones	268
Prerequisites to Success	284

PREFACE.

With a few exceptions, the sermons in this volume were preached in the old Calvary Church on Twenty-third Street, and most of them in the earlier years of the author's ministry. The reason for limiting the selection to this period is, that another volume containing sermons preached in later years, and some of them within a few months, will soon be published.

Not without reluctance are the anniversary sermons introduced; but it was the earnest wish of many friends, both of the earlier and the later ministry, that the first sermon of the pastorate and the fourth and the tenth anniversary sermons should be included. The last two named, it was thought, apart from their interest to the friends of the church, would be of interest in wider circles, because of their discussion of some methods of church work. The last three in the volume were preached in the new church; they are given, as is also the last one preached in the old church, because of their relation to the history of the removal from the old to the new house of worship and field of labor.

To his own people, dearer to him than any words may attempt to express, these sermons are affectionately commended; and to them and to all others with the fervent hope and sincere prayer that they may honor Christ and advance His cause.

The Author.

Calvary Baptist Church,
New York, December, 1889.

CHRIST, AND HIM CRUCIFIED.

I.

PAUL'S DETERMINATION AT CORINTH.

"For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."—1 Cor. 2 : 2.

It is said that, leading to an Austrian city, there is a bridge in the parapets of which there are twelve statues of Christ. One statue represents Him as the Sower, another as the Shepherd, another as the Carpenter, and another as the Physician ; others represent Him as the Pilot, Prophet, Priest, and King ; and still others represent Him in yet other characters. The simple-minded country people coming into the city in the early morning with their produce for the market, pause and pray before Christ the Sower. A little later, the artisan on his way to his workshop worships Christ the Carpenter. Later still, when the sun has scattered the mists of the morning and has flooded the earth with his supernal splendors, the invalid, creeping from the city to breathe the fresh air of the country, presents his morning prayers to Christ the Physician. Doubtless, there is much of superstition in this worship, but there is in it also a great truth. Each worships the Christ who is nearest to himself—the Christ who best interprets his own thoughts and best supplies his peculiar wants.

It is the glory of Christ that He can be everything to everybody the world over. To-day I lift before you Christ, and Him crucified. This is the view of Christ which gives significance and glory to all other representations; it is the one which so engaged the whole being of the apostle, which captivated his imagination, controlled his intellect, and constrained his heart. In all the history of the race there was not to Paul such a life as Christ's, and in all the life of Christ there was no such glory as that which gathered round His cross.

Sadly Paul leaves Athens, goes forty-five miles and comes to Corinth. This famous Grecian city was situated on the isthmus which joins Peloponnesus to the mainland of Greece. Horace calls it "bimaris"—on two seas. Corinth was the natural portage from the Ionian Sea on the west to the Ægean on the east. Both the Greeks and the Romans attempted to join the two seas by cutting a canal across the isthmus, but owing to the rocky character of the country the effort was not successful. By an ingenious contrivance galleys were carried across on trucks. Corinth had two harbors, Lechæum on the west and Cenchreæ on the east. It thus became the mart of Asia and Europe. Its ships whitened the seas. Foreigners crowded its streets. Near the city the Isthmian games were celebrated. These games attracted strangers from all parts of the world. The religion of Corinth was debasing. Venus was the principal deity, as Diana at Ephesus and Minerva at Athens. "It is not for every one to go to Corinth" became a proverb which merchants well understood as referring to the debasing worship of Venus. Old Corinth became subject to the Romans 146 B.C. For nearly one hundred years the city lay waste. But Julius Cæsar sent thither a colony of freedmen from Rome, and soon the wealth, splendor,

and vices of ancient Corinth reappeared in the new city. It was to this new city that Paul came. Corinth has been called the "Paris of antiquity." Wealth abounded. Luxury held constant carnival. Vice triumphed. In the name of the holiest instincts of the soul the foulest sins of the body were committed.

To such a city as this Paul came. Here he preached. Here a church was formed—a church to which or from which Paul's most famous epistles were written. The Gospel that could win in Corinth can win anywhere. After Paul had left Corinth, and while at Ephesus, intelligence came to him concerning the Corinthian Church from the household of the pious Chloe, and also from an epistle which the Corinthians had addressed to him. The painful condition of things thus communicated to him led him to write this epistle. In this letter he opens to us his heart. He is a hard-hearted man who can read these words without emotion. As we study them we can feel across the continents and the centuries the throb of that great heart which beat in the bosom of the greatest apostle. Our theme this hour is Paul's determination at Corinth.

CHARACTERISTICS OF PAUL'S DETERMINATION.

1. Let us, in the first place, notice some of its characteristics. It was a deliberate determination. Some have supposed that Paul was disappointed alike with the methods and with the results of his work at Athens. But others claim that his sermon there was an admirable illustration of his own principle of being all things to all men that he might win some to Christ. The latter would make his determination at Corinth refer rather to his purpose to discard all mere rhetorical finish and oratorical art. It is also to be borne in mind that his ser-

mon at Athens was never completed. He had just begun to speak of the resurrection and the judgment when the interruption came. To say that he made a mistake at Athens involves difficult questions of inspiration. No one is warranted in making that statement. Nevertheless, it seems to me that there is in the text an undertone which suggests a decided contrast between the method pursued at Athens and that now determined upon at Corinth. The word used here implies that his determination was reached after much reflection. Paul was not a man who would rashly come to a conclusion. Neither was he the man who would be likely to abandon a position which he had deliberately taken. That resolution was not accidental. In that great and sinful city of Corinth he deliberately determined to know and to preach only a crucified Saviour.

It was also a courageous determination. Paul well knew the fondness of the Greeks for a finished rhetoric and a graceful elocution ; he also knew their love for philosophical speculations. He gives us in some of his epistles indications of his own natural fondness for abstruse and metaphysical discussions. He well knew that such discussions would attract the attention and awaken the enthusiasm of his audience. On the other hand, he knew that his chosen theme would expose him to the contempt and derision of his critical and captious hearers. Still, he had the courage of his convictions. Addressing poets, orators, and philosophers, he discoursed not of poetry or oratory or philosophy. It is true that it was Athens which was called " the eye of Greece, mother of arts and eloquence," and that Corinth was especially noted as a great mercantile city. Still, Cicero calls Corinth, because of her intellectual attainments, " the light of all Greece." Paul knew how a Jew would be de-

spised by the Greeks. Physically and mentally they were Pharisees ; they despised all others as barbarians. They were the favored sons of sunny Greece ; and Paul comes to speak to them of a Jew who was crucified by His countrymen as a felon. I tell you, friends, that was grit, that was grace, that was pluck, that was piety.

We still speak of the offence of the cross ; but we oftener speak of its glory. How its meaning has changed since Paul preached at Corinth ! Then it was to his hearers what the gibbet or the gallows would be to an audience to-day. Behold the transformation ! Poetry with unfading garlands now decks the cross ; sculpture honors it ; architecture, in noblest cathedral, copies its form ; painting sits before it until its heavenly light illumines the canvas ; genius, in every department of thought and activity, has found its highest glory in placing the diadem on the brow of the Crucified. To-day many of you bear the image of Christ and Him crucified in your deepest souls. You have just sung

> "In the cross of Christ I glory,
> Towering o'er the wrecks of time."

That song expresses the deepest joy and the highest glory of millions on earth and in heaven. At this very hour, I doubt not, some of you would rise from these seats, walk to that street and lay your heads upon the block rather than deny Him who once hung on that cross. Oh, brave Paul ! Our hearts catch the enthusiasm of thy courageous determination. How men in our day ought to blush who are ashamed of Jesus. A man who is ashamed of his Christian principles is a man of whom his Christian principles have cause to be ashamed. Oh, for the lofty courage of Paul's noble determination !

But it was also an intelligent determination. Paul was a student of history. He was not a narrow man.

If he was a man of one idea, as some have said, it was an idea so broad that it included all true and noble ideas. He was a cosmopolitan man. The truth that flashed upon him as he journeyed toward Damascus enabled him to interpret the Old Testament in the light of the cross. He saw that all the ways of God's revelation converged toward and met in the cross. He saw that if you take it away, the Old Testament is meaningless. He saw that the cross is the centre of the Bible. It is more, and thoughtful men in our day are beginning to recognize the fact: It is the pivotal point around which all the events of the world's history revolve. "All the light of" secular as well as "sacred story gathers round its head sublime." All the centuries before Christ's coming prepared for that coming; all the centuries since expand and illustrate the significance of His advent. Christ is King. All events of history previous to His death converged toward the cross; all events since, have diverged from it. The cross stood at the confluence of three streams of civilization. The superscription on it was written in three languages: Hebrew, the language of religion; Greek, the language of culture; Latin, the language of law. A marvellous blending of these three varieties of national life prepared for the spread of Christ's kingdom. Are you a student of history? You must "build your studio on Calvary." Nations flourish and decay, kingdoms rise and fall, but amid all changes the student will see "Jesus only." As well might a man attempt to write a text-book on astronomy and refuse to recognize the sun, as write a history of this world and leave out Jesus Christ. Christ is the Sun of the moral universe, and around Him all events evolve. The disciple of truth will find Christ everywhere. Perhaps Hugh Miller went too far when he claimed that he found

the cross in the hoary rocks. But we are sure that the true student of history will see it as the crowning glory of every century. He will see along the track of the ages the footprints of the Son of God. Paul thus saw the glory of Jesus. To see it was the master-passion of his master-mind.

Well might Paul determine as he did. His decision heightens our admiration for the clearness of his intellect as well as for the tenderness of his heart. I ask no favors for him. Judge him in the clear light of this nineteenth century. His determination will bear the test. He was a man of brains; he had that most uncommon kind of sense which we call common sense; he was true as brave and brave as true. Come on, ye philosophers of history, will ye measure swords with this man? We may say of the noble Paul what Dr. Schaff says of the great Neander: He was "a child in spirit, a man in intellect, a giant in learning, and a saint in piety." How the great God who sitteth in the heavens must laugh at the weakness and wickedness of men in denying His presence and opposing His power in the world He has made.

Men have thought they could hew down His cross and dethrone the Lord of glory. They have thought they could overturn the Rock of Ages. They shall learn that "the grass" of sceptical philosophy "withereth, and the flower" of infidel oratory "fadeth," but the word of our God shall stand forever. We commend Paul's deliberate, courageous, and intelligent determination to know only Christ, and Him crucified.

THE MEANING OF PAUL'S DETERMINATION.

2. Notice, in the second place, the meaning of Paul's determination. Can we get the sweet kernel out of his stirring words? Christ's matchless Person and redemp-

tive work were Paul's theme as here expressed. Let us look more closely.

He preached the humanity of Christ. By the mystery of the incarnation Jesus Christ became the Son of man. He had to assume the nature which He came to redeem. He said of Himself, "a body hast Thou prepared Me." He took upon Himself the form of a servant; He literally emptied Himself. He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many. We stand by the cradle in Bethlehem and remember that He whose arm upholds the universe was once Himself borne upon a woman's arm. He was a true man. Christ did not lay hold of the nature of angels. He came to save men, and if He would lift our poor fallen nature He must put Himself beneath it. We need a living, loving, divine-human Redeemer. The heart cries out for a Saviour so near us as to win our tenderest love; and yet a Saviour so far above us as to command our highest reverence. The soul needs just such a Saviour as was Jesus. It can know no true rest until it can repose on His bosom. Christ was more than *a* man—He was *Man*. He was the head of a new race. All the virtues of woman and all the nobilities of man are in Him. I stop not to prove, in any formal way, the humanity of Christ. We all accept it as true.

But we need to make more of this truth. We have often put Christ too far away from us. Never until I was in my last year in the theological seminary, did I fully feel the uplifting power of Christ's divine-human sympathy. The foundations seemed to be slipping from beneath me; I cried with an intensity of desire, born of an awful fear, and an arm mighty as God's was put about me; and it lifted me to a heart tender as a mother's. Some enemies of the truth have done good by calling at-

tention to Christ's humanity. His life has been vividly written. Renan, and others of his class, can be cleavers of wood and drawers of water for Christ's servants. The places Jesus visited have been graphically described. He has been called out of the shadows of time and distance, and made to appear in a vivid historic reality. Writers of this class have done, perhaps unintentionally, great good. "The man Christ Jesus" touches our hearts with tenderness and inspires them with hope. The proper presentation of this truth is the only antidote to some errors which have grown out of its suppression. How shall you prevent the mariolatry of the Romanist? That he does worship Mary cannot be denied. In Rome to-day, she is placed far above Jesus Christ. Shall you denounce her and her worship? You will by so doing only multiply her champions and worshippers; and you will also be false to fact, for she was a true and noble woman. Shall you summon to your aid reason and Scripture? Yes, and you can readily show that there is not a passage in the Bible which can fairly be quoted as favoring her worship. But the devout Romanist will still continue his worship. What shall you do? This: preach Christ in all the fulness and glory of His divinity and humanity. Where Christ is not so preached Mary embodies a tender thought and supplies a real want in the human soul. In heathenism physical power was everything; moral purity was nothing. Christ introduced a new thought. He taught that purity is power, meekness might, and gentleness greatness. These were womanly virtues. Mary came to represent them; Mary came in process of time to be worshipped. We must show that all that is purest in woman and noblest in man is found in Jesus; that He meets every want of every soul. We must learn that the best way to preach down

error is to preach up truth. Never raise Satan unless you are sure you can lay him. Never throw down the gauntlet to him unless you know that you can give him a deadly lunge. The best way to keep out the plants of error is to fill every spot of the soil of the heart with the good seed of the kingdom. To keep chaff out of the measure fill it with wheat; then let the wind blow the chaff as it pleases. The great mass of church-going people have learned from Christian ministers almost all that they know of Darwin, Huxley, and others of their class. If the theories of these men are demonstrated to be true, we shall have neither need nor right to oppose them. So long as they are only theories what is the use of directly opposing them? God is One; truth is one. God cannot contradict Himself. Why waste time on theories? The pulpit has something better to do than to advertise the devil's nostrums. To cure error, liberate truth. Christ not only proposed to give Lazarus life, but liberty also. The truth must be loosed. To be fair with an opponent, you must state him clearly. Often the statement, being largely in his language, is clear and strong; often the refutation is obscure and weak. The statement is remembered, the refutation is forgotten. The valiant knight of truth often succeeds only in giving prominence and dignity to a hitherto unseen and perhaps unknown foe. We have paid the devil too much respect; we owe him nothing but contempt and disobedience. As preachers we cannot know everything about everything; but we ought thoroughly to know God's Word. Let us fully, fearlessly, and kindly declare it, and victory over every error will be on the side of God's truth.

Oh how precious it is to think of the manhood of Christ! He was the only person ever born into the world who had His choice as to how He should come,

and He chose to come as a babe and in poverty. He trod the lower walks of life, and poverty was dignified. He became a babe, and babyhood was glorified. He lived as a boy, and boyhood was forever honored. All the conditions of life into which He entered He exalted and sanctified. On the cross He gave a young man's life for the world's sin. On the throne to-day He sits with the dew of immortal youth and the glory of eternal manhood. Once He suffered; now He forever will sympathize. The whole race is ennobled by the thought that humanity with Divinity sits at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

Paul preached Christ's Divinity also. A man cannot save his fellow. However exalted Christ might be as a man, He would still be helpless to save a soul from death. A man cannot find a ransom; a man cannot meet the claims of God's law; a man cannot stand in the holy place; a man hath not clean hands and a pure heart. The Saviour must be God as well as man. Man may sympathize; God alone can save. We need both the humanity and the Divinity of Jesus Christ. If you deny either, you contradict Isaiah when he speaks of Christ as "a child born, a son given," and at the same time as "the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." John distinctly tells us that the "Word was God," and also that the "Word was made flesh." But I am not undertaking to prove to you, brethren, His Divinity. This is not necessary. I am simply showing how in harmony with this view are the trend and spirit of Scripture. Some men say Christ was good, was the best man the world has ever seen, but He was not divine. Out of their own mouths such men shall be convicted of inconsistency and stupidity. Christ was either divine or He was not a good man; He was

God, or—can we say it with reverence?—He was an unpardonable egotist or a hopeless lunatic. He claimed to be divine; He was put to death because of that claim. John says He was full of grace and of truth; but if not divine, He was full of falsehood. From the first majestic words of Genesis to the last love-note of Revelation the uniform testimony of every devout heart concerning Christ is, in substance, "My Lord and my God." This truth fired the heart of Paul. How grandly he bursts forth with his magnificent doxology: "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen." And let all the people say, Amen and amen. A symmetrical Christ, perfect man and perfect God, is the need and is the hope of the world.

But Paul preached Jesus Christ, and Him crucified; he recognized the expiatory character of Christ's atonement. This glorious doctrine is the very pith and marrow, the warp and woof, the very heart of the whole Bible. This doctrine has always been an offence to some opposers, to the Jews it was "a stumbling-block;" to the Greeks it was "foolishness." Both Jew and Greek have their representatives still. There are in our day those who regard the atonement, considered as a propitiatory sacrifice, with the utmost disfavor. They deny that His death had any reference to the satisfaction of Divine justice; that He was in any sense the sinner's Substitute; that He did anything to satisfy the claims of God's justice. His death, they claim, was due to man's wrath, and its effect is simply in its moral influence over us by His self-sacrificing example.

That Christ's death exercises such a power we joyfully admit. It has its manward side, but that because of its Godward side. It must not be forgotten that while God

is a loving Father He is also a righteous Judge. God must be just; if unjust He must vacate His throne. What is the testimony of the Scriptures? They affirm that "it pleased the Lord to bruise Him;" that "He was wounded for our transgressions;" that "He hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin," and that "Christ suffered for sins, the just for the unjust." All God's revelations, in symbol, type, and prophecy, declare with trumpet-tongue, that "without shedding of blood there is no remission;" and the glory of Jesus, of which the redeemed shall ever sing, is that He "bare our sins in His own body on the tree." The man who will deny that these Scriptures teach the vicariousness of Christ's death could not be convinced by any amount of scriptural authority. The true view gives to Christ's self-sacrificing example all the power which the moral influence theory does, and it also satisfies both reason and faith by giving us an expiating Saviour, who meets the claims of God's law, and thus wins the homage of man's love. To preach Christ, and Him crucified, then, will include all the marvellous mystery of His august person, the great facts respecting His spotless life, the efficacy of His atoning death, His triumphant resurrection, His glorious ascension, and His prevailing intercession; it includes our pardon and peace by the blood of His cross, our complete salvation in Him here, and our blessed home in heaven hereafter. Here is enough to excite the joy and exhaust the skill of the highest angel.

THE MOTIVE OF PAUL'S DETERMINATION.

3. Let us look, in the last place, at the controlling motives of the Apostle's determination.

This was the only preaching which could harmonize the facts of Christ's life. Some tell us that Christ grew

sullen and morose, toward the end of His earthly life; that those severe denunciations near the close, contrasting in so marked a way with the Sermon on the Mount, show how bitter was His spirit and how keen was His disappointment. These men forget that Christ's conversation with Nicodemus took place some months before the Sermon on the Mount. In that conversation, He distinctly described the manner of His death; He distinctly foretold that as Moses lifted up the serpent even so must He be lifted up. In that conversation He gave us the fullest statement of the means of salvation which ever came from His lips. Nowhere else in the gospels, and nowhere in the epistles, can you find so clear a description of the work of each person in the blessed Trinity in human redemption. It is true, that until a little time before His death, Christ did not in public discourse plainly allude to that death, and there were reasons for this omission. But in this conversation with Nicodemus the allusion is explicit. Christ's baptism was also a symbol and prophecy of His death and resurrection. The cross, gloomy and grand, ever lifted itself before His mind; that He should die on that cross was one of the ends for which He came into the world. Now Paul saw this. He always meant to be true to the Christ. My soul has ached for him when I have seen how he sinned through ignorance of the true Messiah. But on that Damascus highway what blessed light flashed upon the Old Testament teachings of the Christ! What a new world of thought and feeling was revealed to him! Now he sees the symmetry, the harmony, the glory of the truth. He sees how the Sufferer is still the King; he sees that the way to the throne is by the cross; he sees that he who would reign must serve; that to conquer it is necessary to stoop; that lowliness is loftiness.

He sees that Christ is the world's Prophet, Priest, and King, because once He died as a sacrifice for the world's sin. The cross was His throne—blessed revelation! Now to Paul, Christ's life is a sublime harmony. So Paul gloried in the cross. He would have no other glory. On earth he caught the first notes of the song which ever since his exaltation he has been singing in heaven, "Worthy is the Lamb which was slain."

This, we remark again, was the only preaching which could harmonize the attributes of God. How shall we reconcile the apparently contradictory attributes of God? He describes Himself as exercising loving-kindness, and at the same time as inflicting judgment. He is at once a merciful Father and a righteous Judge; a just God, and yet a Saviour; abounding in mercy, and at the same time hating iniquity. This is the true character of God as made known in Scripture. Men have erred when they have taken one-sided views of God. Some regard Him as too merciful to punish sin; others, going to the other extreme, regard Him as too just to forgive sin. The result is that while one class presumptuously approach Him, the other class sink hopelessly into despair. These are important considerations. In the administration of human justice no question is more perplexing than that of granting pardon. If never granted, government may become tyranny; if granted often, law becomes only advice. A law without a penalty is not law; it is only advice. Mercy and justice cannot always meet in the human judge. The human judge may have to condemn his own son. But in God there is a union of all perfections. Only as He is seen in the face of Jesus Christ can He be rightly known; only in the sacrifice on the cross can the mercy and justice of God be seen in blessed union. In the cross, God shows Himself

to be eminently a merciful Saviour; there He shows His hatred of sin; there, too, He shows how it may be forgiven. It is the glory of God that He can be just, and at the same time be the Justifier of the believer in Jesus. He can preserve the honor of His law, and yet extend pardon to the penitent. The harmony of these seemingly inconsistent attributes gives glory to the cross of Jesus. It lifts God's plan of redemption above all human conception, makes it a constant marvel to the angels, and gives the redeemed in glory a theme for eternal praise. At the cross the beautiful words of the Psalmist have their sublime illustration:

> "Mercy and truth are met together,
> Righteousness and peace have kissed each other."

Standing beneath the cross, we remember that God spared not His own Son, but freely gave Him up for us all; there we see the boundless mercy of God. Still standing beneath the cross, we remember that it pleased the Lord to bruise that beloved Son, and to make the iniquities of us all to meet upon Him when He took the sinner's place—there we see the inflexible justice of God. In the cross, these glorious attributes meet. Here is the atonement—the "at onement," as Bishop Hall and other English writers once wrote it. Around the cross these glorious truths meet in eternal harmony. Here let us stand, and with angels and glorified spirits sing, "O, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!"

Furthermore, Paul knew that this was the only preaching which could save men. This truth had saved him. He had the testimony of personal experience. The lion had been changed into the lamb; the bitter persecutor into the loving disciple. It is impossible to account for

that change if the power of this truth and the grace of God be denied. Almighty grace came to his soul; like the walls of Jericho, its ramparts fell before the power of God. The power that could tame him could subdue the hardest heart.

With undaunted heart we stand beside the cross to-day. In this sign we shall conquer the world. An uplifted Christ is still the mightiest magnet to attract the hearts of men. That cross is still the power and the wisdom of God. Some men affirm that the old Gospel is losing its power; that "modern thought" demands a modern gospel. They have denied that the Gospel is a finality; they have invented other gospels. But what is new in these inventions is not true, and what is true is not new. They have tried spiritualism, and it has proved itself to be a vulgar cheat, a contemptible fraud. They have tried materialism, and it has proved itself to be what Carlyle, in his coarse way, called it, "a gospel of dirt." They have tried various shades of liberalism, but negatives are poor food for hungry souls. They have tried science. To a true science, religion has no objections to urge. What God says in His works must agree with what He says in His Word. Genesis and geology, when each is rightly interpreted, must harmonize. A true science will lay its crown at Jesus' feet. Men have tried atheism. They would dethrone God, and they would degrade men; but God refuses to be pushed out of the world which He has made. One scarcely knows whether most to pity or to despise these false teachers. They certainly excite our pity; they almost justify our contempt. They are blind in the gleaming light of the nineteenth century. Once Thomas Paine boasted in the Broadway Hotel, in New York, that in five years there would not be a Bible in America. How we smile at his

folly! The day will come when the defiant predictions of another blatant and blasphemous infidel will excite corresponding pity and contempt. The pulpit losing its power! the Bible becoming obsolete! The pulpit never was so mighty a power as it is at this hour. The Bible was never so triumphant as it is to-day. We are to-day witnessing the sublimest sight ever seen beneath the skies since Christ trod this earth. The whole world is waiting on bended knees and with bated breath for the Revised New Testament! I tell you that as a Christian man I walk with my head among the stars. The highest point of human greatness men ever reach is when they bow at the feet of Jesus Christ and take Him for their Lord and God. Away with the devil's nostrums! I respectfully decline to be orphaned in my Father's world. We want the old, old Gospel—old as eternity, and new as the last sunbeam which has kissed your cheek. Nothing but the bread of heaven can feed the hungry soul. Nothing but the balm of Gilead can heal the heart's sorrow. Blessed be God, His Gospel will never lose its power until Satan is crushed beneath our feet, and Christ is worshipped as Lord of all.

SOME LESSONS.

Permit me to suggest a lesson or two.

What Paul preached, we should believe—unconverted men and women you should believe it. It is your only hope. Before you I uplift the Crucified One. Here behold the grandest display alike of God's justice and love. Look and live. "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." Ministers of Christ, you should believe it. You will be shorn of your power if you do not. Uplift that cross. Display that blood-stained banner. Teach the old doctrines. Do not apol-

ogize for God : declare Him. The best evidence of Christianity is Christianity. The cross is its own witness. The Christian minister who uses his position to betray his Lord, had better have his arm paralyzed at his side ; had better have his tongue cleave to the roof of his mouth. In proportion as the spirit of the cross controls every thought and feeling of our lives, glistens in the eye, trembles in the voice, and is felt in the affectionate grasp of the hand, shall we be successful. Here, in the presence of God and His people, let us determine to be loyal to Christ's Gospel until our work is done and our reward is won. Christ, and Him crucified, our theme in life, our watchword in death, our song in heaven.

Another lesson is this : What we believe we should propagate. Any truth that is worth holding is worth propagating by the printed page and the living voice. No argument is needed to convince you of the power of the press. The old Homeric heroes are represented as standing on the hill-tops of Greece and sending out their voices into its clear air to brother heroes seven miles away. The press is the hero of the nineteenth century, who stands by the mighty Atlantic and sends his voice across a continent to the mightier Pacific ; sends it around the world. The devil shall not have the best of everything. The discoveries of our day are for Jesus. When good Dr. Warren saw a ship leaving the dock at New York, with a group of missionaries on her deck, he said, " That is what ships are made for." He was right. Steamships and railroads, the press, the telegraph, the telephone, are all for Jesus. " Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty ; for all that is in the heaven and the earth is thine. Thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou

art exalted as head above all." Let the Assyrian boast of the number that he cut off. What was the Assyrian? This: "The rod of God's anger, and the staff of His indignation." Let Cyrus boast of the mighty work that he accomplished. How did he do it? Thus: "I girded thee," God says, "though thou didst not know me." "The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof." Jesus is King. He is laying His hand on the discoveries of the hour; the inventive genius even of His enemies shall contribute to His glory. Man, horse, and steamships shall carry His truth; telegraphs shall girdle the world with His glory, and telephones shall make the world "a whispering-gallery" with His praise. When the pierced hand of Jesus Christ shall be laid on the press of the world the first rays of the sun of millennial day shall color the sky with its crimson and gold. We need the living voice of the living preacher; nothing can surpass that instrumentality. We need also the printed page sent out as leaves for the healing of the nations.

We should make more of the distribution of religious and denominational literature—books, pamphlets, and newspapers. Every convert who comes into our church should be supplied. There ought to be a good Baptist newspaper in every family. A good denominational paper in every home in a church would be worth more to the pastor than an assistant pastor.

A last lesson is that we must feel a personal responsibility for the preaching of the Gospel. You cannot do effective work for Christ at long ranges. A Roman youth complained to his father that his sword was too short. "Add a step to it," said the father. The Bible is the "sword of the Spirit." To use it well, you must come into close quarters. "The Autocrat of

the Breakfast Table" says, "We are the Romans of the modern world—the great assimilating people. And so we come to their style of weapon. Our army sword is the short, stiff, pointed *gladius* of the Romans." And he adds, "The race that shortens its weapons lengthens its boundaries. It was the Polish lance that left Poland at last with nothing of her own to bound." He then asks, "What business had Sarmatia to be fighting for liberty with a fifteen-foot pole between her and the breasts of her enemies?" It will not do for us to fight our Lord's enemies in this fashion. We must come to close quarters. This Christ did. The warm heart of the living prophet touched the cold heart of the dead boy. You rejoice in the glorious Gospel of the crucified Christ which Paul preached; let others share your joy. I appeal to you as men, as Christians and as Baptists, as you love Christ and glory in His cross give money to send the men who shall carry the good news to the perishing, so that the dumb may sing with joy, and the desert may blossom as the rose. May the theme of "the matchless Paul" at Corinth—Christ, and Him crucified—be our glory in life, our hope in death, and our song in heaven! God grant it, for His name's sake. Amen.

II.

THE CRUDE CAKE.

"Ephraim is a cake not turned."—Hosea 7 : 8.

Ephraim was the second son of Joseph, by his wife Asenath, and the founder of one of the twelve tribes of Israel. His birth took place during the seven years of plenty, it is generally supposed. Many believe that the name itself contains an allusion to this fact, as it means "double fruitfulness." Another interpretation finds the meaning of the name in the growth of the family itself. Ephraim's elder brother was Manasseh ; but, as on a former occasion in the family, the younger was to rule over the elder. That destiny was first indicated in the blessing of the children by Jacob, their grandfather. The old man's eyes were dim, so that he could not see. Joseph so arranged his sons that Jacob's right hand should give its richer blessing as it was laid on the head of Manasseh. But either by the will of God or the wish of Jacob, or both, it was otherwise ordered. Jacob was himself a younger son ; his sympathies are now with Ephraim. A second time in this family the younger is placed above the elder. Ephraim is put above Manasseh. The immediately subsequent history of the tribes does not seem to bear out this early promise. But under the leadership of an Ephraimite, the brave and noble Joshua, son of Nun, the land of promise was won. This gave the proud and haughty tribe a higher position than its

mere numbers would have implied. The new kingdom ruled over by Jeroboam was in large part the kingdom of Ephraim. The word Ephraim thus came to stand for Israel, and in this representative sense it is used in the text before us.

A word in regard to baking in the East will throw light on the text. It is the custom to heat the hearth, or a portion thereof; then sweep carefully the portion heated, put the cake upon it, and cover it with ashes and embers. In a little time the cake is turned. It is then covered again, and this process is continued several times until it is found to be sufficiently baked. Israel, as a loaf, had been put under the ashes, but, though well leavened and kneaded, Israel had not been carefully turned. One side became a burnt crust, and the other side remained raw dough; and thus both sides were absolutely worthless.

Ephraim still lives. All his characteristics are still seen. He has many representatives at this hour. Let us look at a few of these representatives in their order.

1. The man who lives for pleasure alone is a cake not turned. One side of his nature is unduly baked; the other is entirely neglected. Pleasure has its uses, but pleasure as a business is a very poor business indeed. Honey is good, but the man who undertakes to eat nothing else will have neither brawn nor brain.

There are many representatives of this class. Some are from the lower and more grovelling classes; these are born in environments of sin. Their pleasures are of the lowest and most sensual kind. They live in the damp cellars of their earthly house. Their degradation is seen in their very faces. They are almost below the rank of human beings, and to class them with animals is to do

the animals injustice. But others of this class belong to the higher walks of life. They have elegant homes, they are surrounded by every evidence of wealth and luxury ; nevertheless, they must claim kinship with the more degraded classes in that pleasure is the only aim of their lives. One danger of American society in our day is that many young men of wealth feel that they have nothing to do in life. But few of them secure an education. If they have the capacity to study they have not the desire. Comparatively few of them are ever graduated from college. They are not willing to go down to hard work either in study or in business as their fathers did a generation or two ago. These young men are fond of frequenting the clubs. Their talk is most trivial, if not of a coarser character. When they have exhausted the horse-race, the latest play, or the newest amusement, they find themselves at home in the discussion of petty social scandals. Such is the club life of many young men, some of whom have honored names. They do not live—they simply exist. They are a reproach to American life and to the civilization of the nineteenth century. They have no future along this line but one of shame. There are in Wall Street, and in other business centres, honorable exceptions. The great regret is that these exceptions are not more numerous.

In the old country this crisis has happily been passed. A great change has taken place within the past generation—certainly within the last half century. Once no work was respectable for sons of nobility and royalty except gambling or similar pursuits. But now the sons of nobility are taking hold of business. The daughter of the Queen may wed the son of a duke, as honored for his literary attainments and business pursuits as for his long line of ancestors. As goes the court so go the court-

iers. To-day many men of historic names are engaged in banking and other forms of useful enterprise. It is felt that there is something else to do in life beside fox-hunting and pleasure-seeking generally. In order to maintain a respectable standing with the thinking classes of society, such men must do something in life. Two reasons account for this change. One is the comparative non-productiveness of landed estates. That the whole system of landed estates is passing through a crisis is evident even to superficial observers. That the laws respecting property in Ireland have been at times unjust and oppressive all will readily admit. But the same is equally true of England and Scotland. It is needful in all these countries that the great estates be broken up, and that the cultivators of the soil shall have the opportunity to become the owners as well. The great prosperity of the smaller farmers in France is an indication of changes which ought to be introduced into Great Britain. But the recent troubles in Ireland have a deeper origin. The Irish have had the benefit of remedial legislation sooner than England or Scotland. The English Church is disestablished in Ireland. The Scotch Church is not disestablished in Scotland. The Celtic race is, and always has been, impatient of restraint. But the two greatest evils of Ireland are Rome and rum. Roman bigotry and rampant beggary, popery and poverty, Romanism and rowdyism are evermore inseparable. This is true whether in Italy, in Ireland, or in Lower Canada. But this is aside somewhat from our discussion. The great change in public opinion of which we have spoken augurs well for the future. Men of high rank can now engage in business without sacrificing their social position.

If they do not engage in business it becomes necessary

for them to be active in some form of literary or philanthropic work. Strip Mr. Gladstone of all his political honors, and he will still stand before the world conspicuous as one of the ripe scholars of the day. Remove from the Duke of Argyle all the glory of his ancestral name and estates; leave him simply his cultivated intellect and his Christianized heart, and he will still stand before the world as the author of books representing the ripest results of science in loving harmony with the deepest teachings of religion. Remove from Mr. Trevelyan, the recently appointed Chief Secretary of Ireland, the honors of political power, and you still leave him the author of two of the most delightful biographies which the century has produced. Even a son of the Queen meets some of the claims of modern society in his effort to write an oratorio. Men of wealth and social position like Mr. Lecky, can neither satisfy their own ambitions nor the demands of society, except as they contribute something to the world's progress in thought and life; and so Mr. Lecky becomes the author of volumes which will make his name more enduring than monuments of marble or bronze. We ought to be profoundly grateful for this tendency of our times. No man has a right to live on the fame of his family name. On no heraldic crutches ought any man to strut across the stage of life. The world to-day asks you not what your father or grandfather did, but, What have you done? And its demands are right and just. The man who lives for pleasure, whether of the higher or lower kind, is dead while he liveth. He is a wretched parasite; he is a reproach to his species. He consents to doom himself to an early grave, a dishonored name, and an immortal shame. He drags in the mire of his own lust the qualities which might have made him a blessing to the world and a child

of God. He dooms himself to crawl and bite the dust, when he might stand erect and eat angels' food. He is a cake not turned. One side of his nature is burnt to a crust by the fires of unholy desire; the other side of his nature is raw dough. Both are worthless. To-day, in the name of all that is noble in manhood, and in the name of our divine Lord, I beseech you to be true to the loftier instincts of your nature and live for the glory of God and for the good of men.

2. The man who lives for business alone is a cake not turned. This man stands higher, all will admit, than the mere votary of pleasure. Business is good; business has its claims; these claims must be recognized. But even though the business be honorable and the methods of its pursuit unobjectionable, the man who lives for this life alone loses this life as well as the life which is to come. The man to whom this world is a god is a wretched idolater. The man who lives for this life alone may reach that end, as the world regards it. But he has missed the true end even of this life. Were there no life beyond, it would pay any man to spend his time here in the service of God. This life is never truly lived, except as it is used for the good of others and for the glory of God. Our Lord gives us two illustrations in His parables of men who live for this life alone. The first is usually called "the rich fool." Our Lord sets before us this man as a warning against covetousness and as an illustration of the danger of those who trust in this world's goods as a source of blessedness. Nothing is said against this man's character. Not a word as to his having procured his wealth by any unjust means. Indeed, the fact that a rich farmer rather than a trader was chosen as an illustration, suggests the honest and laborious processes by which his wealth was acquired. The sun,

the rain, and all the forces of nature, contributed to his increasing wealth. He had no room where to bestow his fruits. His selfishness appears in that he calls the fruits his own; "My fruits and my goods," he says. But while he made plans for satisfying the flesh, he utterly neglected the higher wants of his soul. He says to his soul, "Take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry; thou hast much goods laid up for many years." He expects to feed his soul on grain. Can a soul eat wheat? Well might God address him as Thou fool! Solemn were the words of warning telling him that that night his soul would be required of him. He heaped up riches; he knew not who would gather them. He was rich toward the world; he was unspeakably poor toward God. He made no provision for the future. To him the future was a blank. It was blackness; it was darkness; it was death; and when the curtain fell he went out into that unknown future, leaving all for which he lived behind.

In another parable—the rich man and Lazarus—our Lord lifts the curtain and shows us what lies beyond. This rich man, like that, lived for this life alone. Unlike the first, he lived a life of jovial splendor. He was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day. He was the incarnation of selfishness. It is not, however, said that he was the oppressor of the poor, nor that he had robbed other men of their goods. He simply lived for himself. He neglected Lazarus lying at his gate. The rich man dies and is buried, and when the costly funeral is over, the curtain is drawn aside, and while Lazarus is in Abraham's bosom, the rich man lifts up his eyes in hell in torments. In his wretchedness a drop of water on his fiery tongue would be a blessing. But he is now reminded that in his lifetime he received his good things. He lived for this life;

he got it. In his misery and perdition he reaps what he had sowed. Having sown to the flesh he reaps corruption. We have here the only illustration in the Bible of a prayer offered to a saint. It was a prayer that came from hell, and it was a prayer that was not answered. The fires of perdition have not baked his nature through. He is still the unbeliever that he was upon the earth. He wishes Abraham to send some one to warn his brethren. Abraham reminds him that they have Moses and the prophets, but this will not silence him. It is as true of the lost as of the saved, that their works do follow them. The temper of the Christian in heaven is but the full fruition of his temper on earth. The spirit of the lost man in hell is but the intensification of his spirit on earth. This man's demand implies that his brethren on earth did not have a fair opportunity, else they would have repented. He would thus throw the blame upon God. He claims that if one went to them from the dead they would repent. Abraham replies that though one rose from the dead they would not even be persuaded. When a Lazarus was raised from the dead the enemies of Christ went about to kill him. The spirit of unbelief which made men opposers of God on earth will follow them even into the regions of despair. Both these rich men lived for this life and for it alone. All men who so live have no outlook, no prospect; this world bounds their view. When the call comes for them to leave it they go into the unknown land for which they are utterly unprepared. I am not now speaking of men who have been guilty of great crimes, except, indeed, the greatest of crimes—unbelief toward God. I am speaking of men whom the world calls eminently respectable. For the future to which they are hurrying they have made no preparation, and such a man's life

cannot but be a gigantic failure. There comes to my mind while I speak just such a man. He lives as utterly without God as if God were dead. He is a husband and a father; but he and his wife and children sit at their table and partake of their food, so far as gratitude to God is concerned, precisely as animals might eat. The name of Christ is never heard in the house except to round a joke or emphasize an oath. This man is without God and without hope. He lives for this life alone. His only god is business. The most important part of his nature is utterly neglected. The faculties which would give him kinship with angels and God lie absolutely dormant. He is defrauding himself of his possible heritage as a child of God and an heir of heaven. He is robbing his home of the sunlight of Christ's presence. He is a cake not turned. One side of his nature is scorched by the friction of the world's cares, and the other is raw dough.

The world has claims upon men of wealth among us. Great possessions involve corresponding responsibility, and the intellect that is used in acquiring ought also to be used in wisely distributing. God will not hold him guiltless who amasses great wealth for personal gratification or family aggrandizement. The wants of ten thousand needy enterprises demand recognition. Only he whose nature is symmetrically developed under the guiding influence of Christ, who came not to be ministered unto but to minister, who came to rule by serving, who came to be King by being the lowliest of all, who came to give life by His death; only as men's lives are modelled by His example can they truly live and triumphantly die. If their life is like that of Ephraim it is a cake unturned. On the one side a blackened crust; on the other raw dough, and both sides useless. These are

crude lives; the word crude means uncooked. The need is that the love of God and the love of their neighbor should so warm their hearts that their characters should be baked through and through, else they cannot escape the charge made against Ephraim of old.

3. A man who lives for culture alone—as that word is usually understood—is a cake not turned. This remark will not apply to a culture that is broad and deep, that takes in the entire being. What is culture? Look at the derivation of the word. It is tilling. To till you must plough or delve; you must rake or harrow. You have culture in a field only as you have tilling. Parts of the field that have not been tilled are not cultured. That cannot be called a cultured field in which large portions have been utterly neglected. New-world farmers are astonished when they see the fields of old-world farmers. Every spot is tilled; every mountain-side is cultured. No man can claim that his is a well-tilled farm, if much of it has never felt plough or spade. No man can claim the honors of culture, portions of whose nature lie fallow. What would you say of a man who would claim to be cultured simply because his muscles were well developed? You say, "Yes; he has physical culture; let him limit his claim to that." But you rightly demand more. The intellect also must have culture. Now, more of the territory has been gone over; now, more may rightly be claimed by the man. But why stop there? The man is more than muscles and mind. You must go higher. All things below man look up to man as their centre. Shall he have no upward look? All faculties within look to the heart, the soul, the conscience. The word conscience suggests this upward look. It is a solemn word. It is knowing together with another. Who is that other? There

stands God. Language itself witnesses for its Author. Man is not a god unto himself. A true culture includes the entire field; it sweeps across every faculty. It has its earthward, manward, and Godward relation. If lacking in any of these directions, it is a partial, defective, and unauthoritative culture. It is a cake baked only on one side.

Tried by this true standard many claimants for this honor will be found wanting. Sidney Smith thought it better not to read a book which he was to review; reading it might prejudice his judgment. So do men of culture in some directions seem to act in regard to religion and the Bible. The religious side of their nature is neglected; other parts are cultivated. On science and art they would not make ignorance a claim to authority; in regard to religion they act as if their ignorance specially fitted them for bold and authoritative statement. Such men would receive our contempt did not our religion teach us to give them our pity. The apostles could say, "We speak that we do know;" not so with these ill-cultured critics of divine things. Locke said: "It needs a sunny eye to see the sun." He is right. No man can really see the ocean, except he who has oceans in his soul; no man can truly enjoy the mountains but he who has mountains on his brain; no man knows love but he who has felt its constraining power. Flesh and blood cannot reveal the deep things of God to a man. The Lord's secret is with those who fear Him. To know bread and meat you must eat them. A hungry man who should coolly pronounce on the life-giving qualities of bread and meat as the result of a chemical analysis, would proclaim himself a fool. You would say of him that much starving had made him mad. So to be able to judge of religion you must have religion. This is not,

on the part of the religious teacher, asking too much. If you are to demonstrate to me a problem in geometry, you have a right to demand that I shall know enough of the science, at least, to follow you step by step. If I do not, how dare I dissent from your conclusion? Is my ignorance to give me authority? Geometrically I am, on this supposition, a cake not turned.

Surely a man ought to be diffident in pronouncing an opinion on subjects which he has never studied. Sir Isaac Newton was right when he said to Dr. Halley, a man of science, but an unbeliever in God's Word, "I am glad to hear you speak about astronomy or mathematics, for you have studied and you understand them; but you should not talk of Christianity, for you have not studied it." That is good sense. Dr. Halley was not a man of culture, so far as Christianity was concerned; that side of his nature was unbaked. In recent discussions of the life and work of Emerson the name of Thoreau has been often mentioned. He is a type of one class of men of culture, so-called. In 1837 he was graduated from Harvard College. For three years he was a teacher. He then occupied himself with various kinds of mechanical pursuits and with land-surveying. He imbibed the spirit of Emerson's transcendentalism. In March, 1845, he built himself a shanty on the shore of Walden Pond. There he lived a sort of hermit life. One object was to see how cheaply and simply a man could live. He demonstrated that it was possible to do this on seventy dollars a year. Noble achievement! Grand ambition! True, he wrote a little. But what did he really accomplish? How was he better than the miserable monastic hermits of the earlier day? Such culture is supreme selfishness, which is the essence of all sin. Emerson, in his measure, fell into the same snare.

He was refined, solitary, personally pure and noble. But whose sorrows did he share? Whose burdens did he lift? Carlyle's culture was painfully one-sided. He was crusted on the one side; he was crude on the other. The harsh, the crabbed, the unloving elements were unduly developed; the tender, gentle, and winning graces were neglected. The men who bless and save the world are not of his stamp. His very greatness makes his weakness the more conspicuous. It is also to be borne in mind that both Emerson and Carlyle seem to have come in their later years more fully into the light of Christ than in their middle life. Remarks made by Emerson plainly show that his pantheism gave way to theism, and that Christ became more and more an Example and Helper. Carlyle fully acknowledged that as he stood on the brink of eternity the old words learned in childhood came back with wondrous power—that the chief end of man was to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever. Culture! Yes; but let it be culture of the whole man. There is more power in the sweet and blessed life of Sister Dora, with her strong body, her clear head, and her consecrated heart, ministering to the sick, instructing the well, and comforting the dying, than in the lives of sentimental hermits, transcendental philosophers, and snarling critics. Give us this stalwart sister; give us the fragile Havergal as samples of a culture which the world needs, and which only the Spirit of Christ and His cross can give. When Moses came down from the mount beams of supernal splendor radiated from his face. Of the silent John and the eloquent Peter men took knowledge that they had been with Jesus. With all your culture forget not that which can be learned only in the school of Christ. Culture will adorn piety; but piety crowns and glorifies culture.

We want both. Both are one. That is not true culture which fails to cultivate the nobler, the diviner elements of the soul. The man who neglects this is a crude Ephraim—a cake not turned.

4. A man who is half-hearted in religion is a cake not turned. Ephraim had introduced much of the superstition and idolatry of the Gentile nations into the worship of Jehovah. Ephraim, though proud and haughty as a tribe, had been lacking in moral backbone, in loyalty, in consecration, in the service of God. The people had worshipped calves at Dan and at Bethel; and yet they called on the name of the Lord. They, like the inhabitants of Samaria in later times, feared the Lord and served their own gods. There are such professors of religion to-day. They have a name to live and are dead; they have the form of godliness but not the power. They have not true religion either in experience or in practice. They to-day serve Baal; to-morrow Jehovah; the next they flit as birds from branch to branch, halting between God and Mammon. This is poor business. A half-and-half man is a failure always and everywhere. No compromise! This should be the Christian's watchword. That was a magnificent army of David's—"fifty thousand who could keep rank; they were not of double heart." They had but one purpose—the honor of their king and the glory of their God. They did not have one heart for the field and another for the home.

To-day, Jesus Christ calls for men with one heart, and that heart on fire with His love. Away with the cowards! Gideon is stronger with his brave three hundred than with the thousands who were glad to return. We want no unturned cakes. Our denomination wants men with convictions; men who know why they are Christians and Baptists. The world needs such men. Men

strong and true ; living, loving, brave, and gentle men —these the Church of God needs. Christ indicates the men He wants. He commands us, in His admirable summary of the Ten Words, to love God with all our heart, and mind, and strength. That is culture. All our faculties, and all of each faculty, must be called into service. We are also to love our neighbor as ourselves. Self-love is right ; selfishness is devilish. It is sometimes said of some men that they are very pious Godward, but very crooked manward. That is a severe criticism when it is true. That is not Christ's model man. He is symmetrical ; he is baked through and through. Unconverted men are crude—uncooked men. A Christian is like a biscuit—twice cooked—as the word means. Christ alone can make such men. Come to the cross of the perfect Man to learn the first lesson in true manhood. Let His love sweetly bake your hearts clear through. Starting thus, and continuing thus, you will never be rebuked as crude Ephraims, but you will one day be presented to God as perfect men and women in Christ Jesus.

III.

ZEALOUS SERVICE FOR GOD.

"Not slothful in business ; fervent in spirit ; serving the Lord." —Rom. 12 : 11.

The Bible is an intensely practical book. It is full of that most uncommon sense which we call common sense. It does not contain specific rules for the government of our conduct in all the varied relations of life. Manifestly it could not. It is said that the Arabian commentators of Mohammed, being desirous of furnishing a rule for every situation in life, prepared a book containing seventy-five thousand directions ; but it was soon found that cases occurred for which no rule of the entire number was applicable. The Bible follows another method ; it lays down broad principles of everlasting righteousness, and it gives us wisdom to understand and grace to apply these principles. These principles, like all God's commandments, are "exceeding broad." They confront the merchant and his customer, the employer and the employed, the physician and his patient, the lawyer and his client, the pastor and his people.

The practical character of the Bible is finely illustrated in the relation between this chapter and the one which precedes it. In that chapter we have a statement of some of the important doctrines of Christianity ; in this chapter we have a dissertation on some of the important duties of Christianity—duties toward ourselves, toward our neighbor, and toward God. Religion is intended to

reach every relation in life ; its aim is to beautify and to glorify life in its lowliest as in its loftiest aspects. It is not a series of speculations ; it is rather a system of obligations. It is designed not simply to inform our minds, but also and chiefly to reform our lives. We have, to this end, in this chapter, many pithy and practical directions. It is the application of the doctrinal teaching of the previous chapter. There was danger that Paul's emphasis of the doctrine of justification by faith might lead to a perversion of that glorious truth. Some might suppose that if salvation is of grace and not of works, they would not need to be careful to maintain good works. Now the apostle reminds us that the faith which justifies, works by love ; that although God prepares in His free grace the highway to heaven, it is walked in only by those who walk in truth and love. We have in the text a threefold direction to guide our activity in daily duties.

DILIGENCE IN DUTY.

1. The first direction in this exhortation is, "Not slothful in business." A little explanation may be necessary in regard to the word here rendered "business." In the eighth verse of this chapter the same word is translated "diligence." It might with propriety be so rendered here—"In diligence not slothful." It denotes ardor or intensity of mind, and then industry or labor. The word business is liable unduly to restrict the meaning. If we include under the word "whatever our hand finds to do," it will be sufficiently correct. The direction means that we should be diligently engaged in our proper employment ; no particular employment is meant ; it is an exhortation to earnestness in all appointed duties.

Religion is always the friend of industry. This text is in perfect harmony with other parts of Scripture. Paul in writing his second letter to the Thessalonians, third chapter and tenth verse, says, "For when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat." The evil complained of here began to show itself even while the apostle was with the Church. Some were idlers, and they needed the earnest words of Paul to rebuke them and to incite them to labor. He was himself a remarkable example of industry. Often did the grand man spend the day in preaching and teaching, and then labor far into the night at his "craft" for support, rather than be dependent on the bounty of others. He becomes righteously indignant at the Thessalonian idlers, and he declares that neither should they eat. They were not to be supported by the charity of others, unless they had done all they could for their own support. This was a common maxim among the Jews; the same sentiment is often found in the writings of Greek poets, orators, and philosophers. The maxim is in harmony with strict justice. At the very dawn of human history we are taught that man was to earn his bread in the sweat of his face. A man who will not work ought to starve. You ought not to help him. Aid given to a lazy man is a premium on vice. The Bible abounds with instructions and warnings touching this whole matter. In Proverbs 21 : 17 we read that, "He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man." This gives us the inevitable result of a lazy and a luxurious life. The man who sets his heart upon the so-called pleasures of idleness and sensuality, must come to poverty. Such a man robs himself of the glory of manhood, and allies himself to the beasts that perish. The "wise man" says again, "Love not sleep, lest thou come to

poverty." Sleep you must; nature demands it; but love not sleep as if you hated work. Still, again, in Proverbs 18:9 he says, "He also that is slothful in his work is brother to him that is a great waster." There would seem to be a wide distinction between the prodigal and the idler; but, in fact, they are closely related. Both are fools; both are on the way to poverty; the one scatters what he has, the other never has anything to scatter. Both make their bed in poverty. Many other passages of Scripture are to the same purport.

It is easy to learn the lessons which God would teach us in the light of these truths. He has no place, at least no good place, in His kingdom here or hereafter for a lazy man. Here all God's servants do what their hands find to do with all their might; there the redeemed are "before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple." It is just as much a duty to be hard-working and industrious, as it is to read the Bible and to pray. Labor existed in Eden before the fall; we know that Adam kept and dressed the garden even in his innocence. It was a mercy to Adam that after his fall he was still obliged to work; and labor is now, not so much God's curse as it is God's blessing. A true Christian is to be more attentive to his duties than the most grasping or ambitious worldling "on the street." Whatever is right in business, that a Christian is to do with all his might; whatever is wrong, that he must entirely and determinedly avoid. But he is to be inspired with a lofty and sanctified ambition; he ought not to let any one pass him on the line of honest endeavor. A lazy Christian, whether in business or in religion, must greatly try God's patience.

Experience and observation abundantly prove the truth and wisdom of these Bible teachings. To thousands of

Christians the necessity of doing hard work is a great blessing. The Italian proverb says: "He who labors is tempted by one devil; he who is idle is tempted by a thousand devils." No men are so likely to become morbid and fretful, and finally insane, as those who have most leisure. It may be a very bad thing to have too many irons in the fire—although Dr. Adam Clarke did not think so—but it is a great deal worse to have no irons in the fire. An idle man is to be profoundly pitied. Our greatest American preacher has said: "It is not work that kills men; it is worry. Work is healthy; you can hardly put more upon a man than he can bear. Worry is rust upon the blade. It is not the revolution that destroys the machinery, but the friction." Luther could preach daily while he was burdened with "the care of all the churches;" at the same time he attended to a correspondence which fills many volumes, and was also engaged in bitter controversies with the ablest men of his day. Similar things are told of Calvin. He wrote his "Institutes," which have so profoundly affected the thought of the world, before he was twenty-seven. While he was at Strasburg, he preached or lectured daily. In Geneva his labors were even greater; there he was pastor, professor, and almost magistrate. He carried on an extensive correspondence with learned men in almost all parts of Europe. He wrote many volumes, and was at the same time a constant sufferer from infirmities of the flesh. Wesley often preached three times a day; one sermon was sometimes given before the break of day to the hard-working miners meeting in the valleys and on the hill-sides of England. In addition he could ride forty miles a day and make a sermon or two in the saddle. Men seldom die of hard work. Bad methods of work, allowing work to drive us instead of our driving

it, late hours and spasmodic efforts—these and similar bad habits often prove fatal. Preaching is healthy; ministers are long lived. Honest work in any department of life's activity is God's medicine for men. Intense activity, physical, mental, and spiritual, is the only salvation of some Christians. This activity brings them into harmony with God. God works in creation, preservation, and redemption. Christ said: "My Father worketh hitherto and I work." God rested on the seventh day from His work of creation; but God never rests from His work of upholding, controlling, and blessing the world which He has made.

Christ put Himself side by side with the Father as a ceaseless worker. He was straitened until His work was accomplished. He affirmed that He must work while the day lasted. He was one of the most intense workers that ever trod this earth. He worked right up to the measure of His strength; often He seems to have reached the point of fatigue and exhaustion. He lay down to sleep that night on His hard pillow on the stern of the little fishing-boat as thoroughly tired as was ever any laboring man in this audience. He sleeps the sleep of weariness, although the rain beats upon His face, the lightning flashes over the lake, and the thunder roars among the hills. He sleeps until the cry of despair reaches Him, then He rises in His might and majesty, rebukes the loud storm and hushes the wild waves. Mark is the Evangelist who especially speaks of Christ as the mighty worker. Attention has often been called by commentators and other writers to the fact that the earlier chapters of his gospel frequently contain the words, straightway, immediately, forthwith, and anon, as translations of one word, indicating intense earnestness in work. These chapters give us the idea of the

utmost activity on the part of Christ as He presses forward to His great work.

The whole earth throbs and heaves with the movements of God as the mighty worker; now it groans with the terrible workings of His wrath; now is it blossoming into beauty and breaks into song with the blessed influences of His love. As life puts a man into sympathy with nature and with nature's God. Such a life cannot, like the divine life in the heart, "spring up into everlasting life;" it must either stagnate or freeze. The highest genius is willingness and ability to do hard work. Any other conception of genius makes it a doubtful and dangerous possession. Buffon said, "Genius is patience." William Carey, our distinguished Baptist missionary, explained the secret of his marvellous progress from being a shoemaker to becoming the founder of the Baptist Mission at Serampore, Professor of Sanscrit and Bengalee at the College of Fort William, and translator of the Scriptures into several Oriental languages, when he said, "I can plod." Good work will tell. Young men, don't whine; don't complain that you are not appreciated. In the long run every man will get what he is worth. If you are capable of filling a high place, go up and fill it. Who will hinder you? The world needs such men. God wants such men, and He will reach down His hand and say, "Come up higher." John Ruskin says: "It is only by labor that thought can be made healthy; and only by thought that labor can be made happy, and the two cannot be separated with impunity." Religion tends to promote industry. It gives us a true conception of the value of time; it constantly impresses upon us the importance of "redeeming the time"—buying up the opportunities. Religion makes us conscientious in the use of time and opportunity. It

takes away the temptation to frivolity and indolence; it solemnly reminds us that slothful servants are wicked servants. We are taught that God, who forbade work on the seventh day, has with equal authority commanded work on the other days of the week, and the man who will not work during the week is as guilty as the man who will not rest on Sunday. Thus all experience and observation, the law of God in His Word and in His work, and the example alike of Christ and the Father, emphasize this part of our text—"Not slothful in business."

FERVOR IN SPIRIT.

2. The second part of the apostle's direction is of great importance—"fervent in spirit." This fervor is the divine fire which kindles the sacrifices of diligent toil, and carries upward the offering of a sweet-smelling savor. Never was this direction more needful than now.

Ours is a busy and bustling age. The most sacred religious duties partake of the spirit of the time. There is danger lest they become mechanical and formal. We must be careful that they do not lack genuine fervor of the spirit. Religious work is pleasing to God only as the human spirit is moved upon by the divine Spirit. God demands that we worship Him in spirit and in truth. All true labor for the glory of God is worship. A holy zeal must mark all our deeds of service. Communion with God is to be maintained amid the din of Broadway and the excitement of Wall Street. The world is not to quench the holy fire in a Christian's heart; but that fire is to kindle a flame in the world's heart. The fervor of a Christian's most exalted moments is to go with him into the coldest duties and severest tasks of daily life. If your business freezes your religion, either your busi-

ness must be very bad, or your religion is very poor. Your religion ought not simply to keep your business from freezing it, but it ought to warm up your business. This religious fervor will make you more successful even in your business. True religion will arouse every element of manhood in your soul; it will summon into activity every dormant faculty, and will start you with rapid steps in the line of noble achievement. Do not tell me that you have been a less successful clerk, partner, or professional man, because you are a Christian. Do not plead neglect of business obligations because of attendance upon religious duties. Duties never clash; obligations never conflict. Attendance at the house of God should make you better men and women in every relation of life. Christ's law still holds good, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." The somewhat erratic Dr. Cumming—to whom I am indebted for some suggestions—says: "Like the ancient patriarch, you will go out with your sacks to get corn, and will return with the sack filled with the corn; and you will find hid in the sack, not, literally, a golden cup, as he did, but something more precious than all—a full sack filled with this world's success, and buried in the midst of it the blessing that maketh rich, and addeth no sorrow."

Many of the rich men in New York to-day are as distinguished for their piety as for their wealth. They have proved that godliness is profitable; that it has the promise of both worlds. "How can I make the most of myself?"—this is a fair question for any one to ask. We travel this road but once. If at the close of life we are compelled to write over that life "failure," the sad record must remain forever; we have no second chance.

The Christian's answer is the true one. If there were no future life it would pay to be a Christian. He has the highest joys even here, and the brightest hopes which the future world can give him; and in the world to come he has a crown, and a throne, and bliss which can neither be expressed nor conceived. Who would not be a Christian? Many of the merchant princes of New York are kings and priests in the sight of God. To the industry, the good associations, the purity of life, and the integrity of purpose, born of their faith in Christ, are they largely indebted for their places of prominence and power. To such men as these New York owes her mercantile enterprise, her princely wealth, and her honored name. Look at the nations of the world! To-day America and Britain march side by side to the high places of the earth. These English-speaking and Protestant nations rule the world to-day. The mercantile enterprise and progressive civilization of the world obey their voice and follow their steps. Wherever they tread, the plants of ignorance and superstition die, and the flowers of liberty and religion bloom. The world to-day is at their feet, because they to-day, as nations, are at the feet of Jesus. Thus it will ever be true that fervor in Christian spirit, and success in mercantile enterprise, will go side by side. This is true of individuals and of nations. If Christ be in a man's heart, industry will be in his hand, and in the end success will crown the labor of his life.

This fervor of spirit is needful to the highest success in Christian work. If it be wanting, that success will be wanting also. Its possession gives many a man irresistible power, its absence robs some men of nearly all power. This all-consuming zeal was an element of Christ's influence. His mother and His brethren could

not understand Him ; the zeal of God's house had eaten Him up. We have often been reminded that Cranmer and Ridley were much more learned scholars than was Bishop Latimer. He did not dare trust himself to quote from the "Fathers" as did they ; but he knew his Bible, and a flaming zeal marked his preaching. This brave man has, perhaps, made a more lasting impression on his nation than any other English reformer. Bishop Ryle, himself a fine example of fervor of spirit, tells us that although Baxter was not equal to some of his contemporaries in intellectual gifts, yet few men exercised so great an influence on his generation as did he, because of his fiery zeal. This remark he also applies to Whitefield and Wesley. They were inferior in mental attainments to Bishops Butler and Watson ; but they produced effects on the people which fifty Butlers and Watsons would probably never have produced. They saved, he says, the Church of England from ruin, and their zeal was the secret of their power. What a power Christians would be in the world if each one could honestly voice this wish of Brainerd, "Oh, that I was a flaming fire in the hands of my God !" Dr. Mason said that Dr. Chalmers's power lay in his "blood earnestness." New York churches, in pulpit and pew, need this fervent spirit to-day. This alone will melt the icebergs, and burn up the "wood, hay, and stubble" in our churches. In many of our churches young men from the country, with hearts glowing with Christian love, are received coldly ; they are chilled, and soon they are lost to activity and joy in the Christian life, and perhaps to that life entirely. Would to God that we believed in every drop of our blood the solemn truths of God's Word ! Oh for quenchless love, glowing enthusiasm, and fiery zeal ! Men are about us on every side who are strangers to

God's grace. They are on the road to the judgment-seat of Christ and are without God and without hope! While we are "not slothful in business," let us see to it that we are also "fervent in spirit."

SERVING THE LORD.

3. The last element in this direction to Christians is "serving the Lord." We adopt the accepted reading and retain the word Lord. This latter part of the direction gives unity, beauty, and sanctity to the entire exhortation. Our diligence in duty and our fervor in spirit, must be governed by a zealous desire to serve Christ. This must be the lofty motive whence all forms of activity proceed. We are in constant danger of neglecting this motive. Activity in business is likely to take our affections from God. It is of the utmost importance, therefore, that we engage in our so-called secular duties in a religious spirit. Every duty should be begun, continued, and ended with reference to the will of God. We are constantly in danger of separating too widely between what we call secular and sacred things; we too often put asunder what God has joined together. According to this creed, religion is the business of ministers, and business is the religion of all other men. Religion is very well for sanctuaries and Sabbaths; but it is not suited to the activities of business and the enjoyments of social life. With the locking up of the church, and the laying aside of Sunday garments, the duties of religion are also too often locked up, and its responsibilities are laid aside. This is all very bad. It degrades business; it dishonors religion. Some of us remember how earnestly President Anderson used to emphasize the duty and glory of serving God in the common duties of daily life. This is the thought of this whole text. It is

possible to be diligent in duty, and yet to serve God. Again and again the apostle expresses this thought; he says: "Servants, be obedient to your own masters, as unto Christ; not with eye-service as men-pleasers, but servants of Christ, doing the will of God." Here he gives us the loftiest motive for the performance of the lowliest duties. Again he says: "Whatsoever you do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ." Elsewhere we are exhorted that, whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, all is to be done to the glory of God. This motive gives dignity and glory to the humblest duty of the humblest child of God; it crowns with unfading honor the labors of every toiler in the Lord's vineyard. The needle of Dorcas wrought for her an inscription, though not in brass or marble, but with thread on garments for the poor, yet one more durable than either brass or marble. Her eulogy will be read when the victories of Roman arms and the glories of Grecian arts are forgotten. Her needle served God as truly as does the pen of the recording angel. The broom of the domestic servant may be as truly used for God as was the sceptre of David or Solomon. You may have the humblest home in social life, and it may yet be more resplendent with the glory of an indwelling Christ than was the temple in all its grandeur. The hod-carrier's ladder may be trodden by angels' feet, as truly as was the ladder which united heaven and earth in the vision of Jacob, and the hod itself may be radiant with the glory of the Lord. You may be just as much called to your work as the preacher of the Gospel is to his. If you are earnestly engaged in an honorable calling for the glory of God, you as truly serve Him in that calling as the most successful preacher of the Word. As students, this thought will give direction to your studies, as busi-

ness men, it will give inspiration to your pursuits, as wives and mothers, it will give glory to the daily routine of life, and as employés in any capacity, it will make your service as not unto men, but as unto Christ.

Let us not think that we must do some great thing, as we call it, to honor God ; let the little things of life be done with a great motive, and God will be honored. It is just as much the duty of some men to make money, as it is the duty of other men to preach. They ought, therefore, to make money for God ; and they ought to feel that they do it to "serve the Lord Christ." No man in health has a right to give up business ; he may have a competency, but the Lord's cause needs and demands all that he can make and bestow. But is it possible for the merchant, the doctor, the lawyer, and the preacher to have distinctly before his mind at every moment this exalted motive ? Perhaps not. I start for Boston, the railway train winds and turns ; at some particular moment I seem to be going in the contrary direction, but I know that this is the Boston train, and am sure that it will reach that city. So let a man know, in the very bottom of his soul, that the dominant purpose, the controlling motive of his life is to glorify God, then let him throw himself with the utmost enthusiasm into his work, and he will not fail of glorifying God in all his undertakings. We have lost much in our daily duties by not carrying into them this religious spirit. My Bible teaches me that every obligation which rests upon a minister to glorify God, rests equally upon every member of the Church. This spirit ought to characterize us in all our duties as citizens. Men say, we do not want politics in religion ; it is very certain, at least, that we need more religion in politics. I do not mean to advocate sectarianism at the polls ; but that question has been thrust

upon us. The willing tools of an unscrupulous hierarchy are asking our support for a man nominated to the highest office in our noble city ; our public schools, and other rights, are in danger. Silence in such a case is not golden. Here and now I utter my emphatic protest. The right of suffrage is a great privilege ; you ought to exercise it in the spirit of prayer and for the glory of God. A sublime sight will greet us next Tuesday, when silently a nation records its will at the ballot-box. You ought to march to that box with the same religious spirit as marks the performance of the most sacred duty in the house of God. This is not to degrade religion, but to apply religion, and to glorify by its presence every duty of life. If our work be done in this spirit the workman's apron may be as holy as the bishop's robe, and every hearth may be an altar to God, every house a house of God, and every table a table of the Lord. The religion which does not sweep through, control, and glorify every duty in life, is a religion not worth having. It should manifest its power in the marts of trade as truly as in the sanctuary of God—making better employers and employés, better husbands and wives, better parents and children—thus making earth a foretaste of heaven. I love to look at old Trinity as she stands in majestic silence, amid the rush and roar of Broadway and Wall Street, pointing with her stony finger to the skies. Every business house and every home should teach the same lesson. Quaintly and truly has it been said :

> "In laborer's ballad oft more piety
> God finds, than in Te Deum's melody."

Poor, indeed, is that man who lives for this world alone. He forgets that although he may gain the whole world, if he lose his soul, he makes an infinitely bad bargain.

To-day I urge upon you who are Christians, to make the text of this morning the motto for life ; let none surpass you in diligence in business ; show to the world that a Christian can stand in the forefront in every noble endeavor. But, above all, let all your undertakings be conducted with a single eye to the glory of God. I urge those of you who are not Christians, first to give your hearts in joyful obedience to Christ as your personal Saviour ; then live for Him whom you have thus made your Prophet, Priest, and King ; and you will sweetly realize how blessed it is to be "Not slothful in business ; fervent in spirit ; serving the Lord."

IV.

THE SEVEN "OVERCOMETHS."

PART I.

"He that overcometh shall inherit all things."—REV. 21 : 7.

HAVING discussed, in expository lectures on consecutive Sunday evenings, the letters to the seven Asian churches, this discourse, and the one which is to follow it, will be given as the conclusion of the series.

All who have given any considerable attention to the letters to the seven churches in Asia are familiar with that method of interpretation, called by Professor Plumptre and others the "historico-prophetic." According to this view these are not simply seven epistles of correction and instruction ; they are that, but they are vastly more. In the view of these interpreters, they give us a prophetic outline of the history of the Church from Christ's departure until His return. This portion of time is divided into seven successive periods, each letter giving the characteristics of one period. Many pious and learned men have held these views. It does not come within the range of our present purpose to trace the growth, or to name the authors of these views, nor to discuss the views themselves at length.

We may, however, frankly acknowledge that in these letters there are many deep and mysterious truths. While they were actual letters to historical churches, and perfectly adapted to the needs of those churches,

they also contain truths for all churches in all countries and in all ages. In a very real sense these seven churches represented the churches of all lands and times. If we look closely at the circumstances and conditions of these churches, we shall be surprised to find how exactly they will be found to represent the churches in our own day. But this periodic scheme of interpretation is altogether unsatisfactory. It often becomes artificial, arbitrary, and contradictory. No historic key will exactly fit the prophetic wards. The facts of no period fully dove-tail into the prophecies supposed to refer to that period. In these attempts men have wasted time and learning which might better have been given to more practical religious ends. To make Scripture mean less than God meant by it is bad ; to make it mean more is possibly worse. Both are dangerous methods of interpretation. An interpretation which puts into Scripture what God did not intend is not exegesis, but "eisegesis ;" it is not getting out God's thought, but putting in man's wish. All my habits of thought and methods of study lead me to shrink from doubtful interpretations of Scripture. Fanciful interpretations have done great harm. Sceptics and opposers of every grade attack, and, perchance, demolish these, and in so doing they think they have refuted God's truth. They have only destroyed the whims of men. God's Word shall stand forever. It is glorious to stand on the everlasting rock of God's truth. When a man is simply the voice which utters the thoughts of the eternal God, his words become authoritative as God's truth itself ; they are God's truth.

In studying these epistles we have been impressed at every point with the fact that they are epistles directly from the Lord Jesus. We have not simply the thought of Christ suggested to John, but we have the very words

of Jesus dictated to John. This fact is deeply instructive in the light of the frequent references to the words of the Master as spoken by Him when on earth. He speaks the same language still. In the last three epistles there are many references to the Gospels; and it is especially remarkable that for the most part they are to the first three Gospels rather than to the last. Christ is still the same Saviour as when He walked and talked with men on earth. This thought has given me much spiritual comfort in the study of this close and searching portion of God's Word. Here we sit, like Mary, at Jesus' feet. John was not His inspired penman; he was His inspired pen. We have not the words of even the inspired John; we have the words of the divine Jesus.

Having gone through on successive Sunday evenings with the discussion of these seven wonderful letters in the spirit thus indicated, we are to-night to notice the order in which the promises of these seven epistles follow one another. That there is a well-marked order no thoughtful student can fail to notice. This order rises by gradual steps from the beginning of the kingdom on earth to its grand consummation in heaven.

THE EPHESIAN "OVERCOMETH."

1. The first promise *gives an assurance of life.* This is found in the letter to the angel or bishop of the Church of Ephesus. "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God" (Rev. 2 : 7). This promise is to him who gains the victory over self and sin, over the world and the devil. The Christian's life is no holiday encounter; it is a determined warfare with a fierce and unrelenting foe. It begins in grace; it ends in glory, but there is often a mighty struggle all the way between. In this

conflict many fall, but those who win the victory shall be at last crowned more than conquerors. The first promise rightly comes first. The harmony and beauty of the series would be disturbed or destroyed if this promise did not come here. Look at it. This is a promise of life. It must come first. What would any promise be without life? This is the basis, the substratum, the necessary condition of all the others. The first is the foundation of all the promises which follow; the last is the completion, the crown, the glory of all which precede. This promise carries us back—as so many of John's writings do—at once to the opening chapters of Genesis. There we had a short account of this tree; now it appears again before the record closes forever. Here the victor is promised admittance into heaven, and heaven is represented as Paradise; here he is assured of sharing the joys of heaven, and they are represented as the fruits of the tree of life of which he should partake. The history of the race is inseparably connected with three gardens—Eden, Gethsemane, Paradise. In the first man sinned; from it he was driven. In the second Christ, the God-man, suffered and died for man's sin, making redemption possible for all and certain to believers. The third is the eternal home of the redeemed. Man is now reintroduced to Eden; the fruit of the tree of life becomes accessible and available. The perpetuity of life is as certain as if man had partaken of the tree of life in Eden. The life which this tree gives—as we see from other parts of this book—is a healing life; it is never failing, eternal. This tree does not wait on the seasons, but bears its fruit at all times. Heaven is an eternal summer. Its leaves are for the healing of the nations. They counteract the deadly working of the tree of sin. The victors are to eat of this tree. The

saints are to hold communion with Christ. He then, as now, will be to them the source of light and love.

This tree, we observe, is in the midst of the Paradise of God. Paradise is a word of Oriental derivation. In substantially the same form it is found in several Eastern languages. Perhaps it is more especially a Persian word. It is said that Xenophon naturalized it in Greek. It meant in the Scriptures at first any garden of delight, then the garden of Eden, then the resting-place of souls, and finally the highest heaven—the third heaven. By it Xenophon meant the pleasure gardens of Persia; but religion took up the word, filling it with its glory and exalting it into nobler meanings. The use of the word paradise is suggestive. Once before, and only once, so far as we know, did John hear that word from the lips of his Lord. Why was it used then? Why was it not often used? Is there any connection between its use then and now? These questions may well detain us for a little. In popular language we know the word stood for all that is fair and beautiful—a garden of delights ornamented with stately trees, watered by limpid streams, and cooled by gentle zephyrs. To convey to the robber on the cross some conception of the glory of heaven that word was used. But in addressing His disciples the great Teacher did not use this word. He wished to lead them to spiritual conceptions of the glory of His kingdom; they were to learn that His blessed presence was heaven. They needed to the very last to be weaned from their conceptions of a kingdom with its throne in Jerusalem, a kingdom in which they should be prime ministers and other great officers of state. Far otherwise was it with that wretched outlaw on the cross; his untutored mind needed some picture of sensuous delight. Christ met him where He could help him; wisely and

graciously Christ stooped to lift up this ignorant seeker. To him the promise is, "To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." The years pass; but this word is not again found in Scripture. Now to John it is again spoken. Spoken once on the cross to a babe in Christ, it is now spoken from the throne to the ripest, noblest, and divinest man on the earth. The loftiest souls are the lowliest; the sublimest are the simplest. Extremes evermore meet. The language suited to children is the language best suited to souls whose ripened faculties give them the simplicity of children. Half-developed men may not use this lofty and lowly speech. Still is it true that Christians of the most advanced culture and piety—men like Payson, Rutherford, and Judson—will find the glowing imagery of Scripture the best form of language to express their glorious hopes. We still speak of gates of pearl, and streets and harps of gold. Culture ought to simplify. He is only half-educated who cannot talk to little children and to ignorant men. The object of learning is to make difficult things plain. To John on the summit of Christian experience the Master could talk as He did to the ignorant robber on the cross.

It is also instructive to notice the correspondence which there is between the nature of the faithfulness displayed and the character of the promise given. They had abstained from idols' food; they shall eat of angels' food. They had denied themselves the sinful indulgence of the world; they shall roam at will through the paradise of God. This same law is illustrated throughout these letters. It runs all through God's kingdom. They who deny Christ shall be denied by Christ; they who confess Christ shall be confessed by Christ. This is a retributive law; it is shame for shame; it is confession for confes-

sion, and denial for denial. This is a solemn law. To it we must all conform.

The meaning, then, of this first promise is that the Saviour would welcome the victor to a world of joy; He would permit him to eat of immortal fruit, and to dwell in an abode of bliss. In the first Eden we had "Paradise Lost;" in this we have "Paradise Regained." All glory be to God for His matchless grace in making this bliss possible, and in giving the victor through Christ the right to the "tree of life!"

THE SMYRNAN "OVERCOMETH."

2. This second promise is to the victor in the Church at Smyrna. In the promise before us, the promise to a poor and suffering church, we have advanced a step. It is charming to notice the reality of this progress. In a general way there was a promise of a crown of life to him who was faithful unto death. This somewhat anticipates the other promise; but the one which comes in the usual order is, "He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death" (Rev. 2 : 11). In the preceding we had the promise of life; *here, the perpetuity of that life is promised.* There was a paradise once before; in it were innocence and joy. But sin entered; death came apace. Shall it be so again? Who can tell? Shall the trail of the serpent be again over Eden's fair flowers? The very thought destroys all hope and joy. A higher promise than the first one is needed; a higher is given. The paradise which shall be a true home for our souls must be beyond the reach of sin and death. We must be assured; we are so assured.

To no one of the race has God given the promise that he shall escape death; to only two of the race has it ever been granted to enter glory except by going through the

gates of the grave. To be born is to die ; not to be born again is to die the second death. The second death lies right in your path ; it is your due ; it is the wages of sin. To the Christian there is no second death ; for him death—in its sadder sense—has died. This thought gives joy. It makes us breathe even now the air of a country which knows no death ; we feel the exaltation of these deep inspirations. The unsaved have death in life ; the redeemed have life in death. These are solemn realities. Montgomery's words are true :

> "'Tis not the whole of life to live,
> Nor all of death to die."

The phrase "second death" is a startling one. In all the Gospels you do not meet the word ; nor in any part of the Bible except in this book do you meet it. It had not yet become a common phrase in the Church ; still, we may be sure that its thought was not unknown to the church at Smyrna. The life of the body is not its true life, so its death is not truly death. True, the phrase was not on Christ's lips during His earthly teaching ; but the awful fact of the second death He clearly taught. Men were taught not to fear those who could kill only the body ; they were to fear Him who could destroy both body and soul in hell. Again and again did Christ express this terrible thought. By anticipation it is a rebuke to the materialism of this day, which would make physical death the end-all of life. Later in the Book of Revelation this "second death" is made identical with the "lake of fire." There is a life beyond this life ; there is a death beyond this first death. Dean Trench quotes what he calls "the fearful gloss of Augustine on these words," "Vita damnatorum mors est." These words are sadly true—the life of the damned is death. Believe

me, this second death hurts. As the first death cuts off from natural life, so the second severs from eternal life; as death is the most fearful thing we know, so that language is used to describe the unknown terrors of that awful thing called "the second death." Three times elsewhere is the fearful phrase used by John in this book. Again Montgomery's solemn words are true:

"Beyond this vale of tears,
There is a life above,
Unmeasured by the flight of years;
And all that life is love.

"There is a death whose pang
Outlasts the fleeting breath:
O, what eternal terrors hang
Around the second death!"

To the faithful Christian there is a crown of life. God might have so ordered it that Christians could go to glory without entering the tomb, but He sees it better that they should sleep there for a time. Yet the glorious promise of life everlasting cheers them in the dark valley; it enables them now to bear the ills of life and to look forward with calmness to death. A crown of righteousness, a crown of glory, a crown of life awaits them. They shall wear the garland of victory and the diadem of royalty forever in the presence of their glorified Lord. Oh, escape this second death! Oh, win and wear this crown of life!

THE PERGAMENE "OVERCOMETH."

3. In the last we saw that this heavenly life is to be perpetual; in this we see *what is its sustenance.* This is found in the letter to Pergamos. "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and I

will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it" (Rev. 2 : 17). This carries us back to the Old Testament period in the history of the Church ; we are with the people of God in the wilderness. There is here a fine illustration of the harmony between the faithfulness and the reward which characterizes these letters. As the sin of the unfaithful led us back to the wilderness, so the reward of the faithful leads us thither also. We get a suggestive glimpse of both sides of that wilderness experience. Here, then, as above hinted, we have the sustenance of this perpetual life. We need other than the world's food even here. Its unlawful pleasures we set aside ; what shall we have in return ? If we refuse to eat meat sacrificed to this world's idols we shall partake of this heavenly and hidden manna. The Christian has a new nature ; he needs new food. Christ asks us to give up sin, not that we may enjoy less, but more. The Christian has meat to eat that the world knows not of ; he has delights of which the worldling cannot conceive. But this promise like the others, refers especially to the future life. God's people were supported in the desert ; they ate of "corn of heaven," of "angels' food." The "hidden" may refer to the pot which was laid up before the Ark of the Testimony. Christ is our hidden manna. Hidden now, the time is coming when we shall see Him. He is the true bread of heaven ; on Him we feed now ; glorious antepasts have we of the future festal day. But we shall see Him as He is ; we shall be made like Him. This beautiful vision is partaking of the heavenly manna ; His long-hidden glory shall then be revealed ; His own prayer shall be answered, and His saints shall behold His glory.

What is the white stone ? There is an almost endless

variety of explanations for this language. There is a fitness in the color. White is the livery of heaven. In the symbolism of colors white has always been associated with victory, purity, and joy. Some would refer the allusion to the practice of the half-civilized tribes of Thrace or Scythia, who noted days of festivity with a white, and days of calamity with a black stone. Still others to the practice, when taking the vote of an assembly as to the guilt or innocence of an accused person, of expressing belief in innocence with a white, and in guilt with a black stone. This is not satisfactory. The redeemed are more than acquitted; they are justified. They are more than "not guilty;" they are the glorified sons and daughters of God. Still others refer it to the stones used in reckoning, or to the custom of the Roman emperors who, in their triumphal displays, threw among the people tokens inscribed with the words, "corn," "clothing," etc. Those who found these tokens might present them and receive whatever was thereon inscribed. Archbishop Trench, following in the main, as he himself says, the hint of the German commentator, Zullig, identifies the white stone with the Urim and Thummim of the high-priest's vestments. What the allusion is on which the language is founded we cannot absolutely tell; its meaning, however, is clear. Christ is to give to each one of the redeemed some token of His favor; it is a secret token; its meaning is intelligible only to Him who gives and to him who gets it. Between every soul and Christ there are secrets never breathed into other ears. Christ stands in special and unique relations to each child of grace. He is all yours; He is all mine. You cannot have so much of Him that I shall have less. The humblest flower can look up into the face of the glorious sun and say, "Thou art all mine;" the mighty

oak can say the same ; it can say no more. In my study I get as much sunlight as if there was no other being in the universe to enjoy a ray. It is all mine ; it is all yours. So with the Sun of Righteousness. If you have told a secret to the person by your side in your pew, you and that person are separated from all others in this congregation. You form a world of your own. Christ and each soul sustain such a relationship.

According to the old Jewish legend the manna in the wilderness tasted to each man like the food he most relished ; to each soul Christ shall come with new marvels, sweetness, and glory, and suited to the special need of each soul. This white stone, with its secret name, is a love-token between your Lord and your heart. Oh matchless mystery of love ! Oh ineffable condescension of grace ! May we all eat of the hidden manna and receive the white stone !

V.

THE SEVEN "OVERCOMETHS."

Part II.

"He that overcometh shall inherit all things."—Rev. 21 : 7.

In dividing our discussion of this summary of these seven letters into two parts, one of three and the other of four letters, we are following the suggestive symbolism of the number seven, and the division of that number common in the Scriptures.

THE THYATIRAN "OVERCOMETH."

4. We now come to the Thyatiran overcometh ; the description is found, of course, in the letter to the Thyatiran Church. Of the victor it is said, "To him will I give power over the nations ; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron ; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers : . . . And I will give him the morning star" (Rev. 2 : 27, 28).

In the last church addressed we saw what would be the sustenance of this heavenly life : *here we see what its employment will be.* We are still in the atmosphere and territory of the Old Testament kingdom, but now we are not in the migratory period. We are swept forward to the grandeur and glory of David and Solomon. Truth has triumphed over the nations ; from this point it is easy to foresee the time when He who is David's Son and David's Lord shall have triumphed over all

His foes. The Bible is full of promises of power and royalty to the people of God. Because Christ reigns, and is pleased to share His throne with them, they shall reign also. The second psalm is the foundation on which these promises rest. The Church is to rule the world, and in a sense does, even now; the saints are yet to judge even angels. This is language of singular grandeur. Professor Plumptre (and the Greek words justify him) finely explains this to be "the might of right, not the right of might." He shall guide the nations—shall do a shepherd's work—that is the idea. The victor shall share in the glory of the anointed King. He shall rule them with a sceptre of iron, that they may learn to bow to the sceptre of love. The power described is not harsh and tyrannical, but firm and mighty. This exaltation is future. When the Son of man shall come to judge the world His saints shall share with Him in His triumphs. Kinship in suffering gives kinship in sovereignty. Here, as in former cases, there is a charming fitness in the nature of the promise. They were tempted to submit to the customs of the heathen; they were in danger of denying their Lord as the Crucified before these enemies. Those who overcame that temptation are assured that they shall one day lord it for truth and Christ over these heathen, that the power of these opposers should be crushed to pieces before the majesty of their King. Why, then, deny Him to please them? The argument is plain; the encouragement is glorious.

Another question comes in here, What is the morning star? The literal star is Venus. This is the bright harbinger of the day. It appears as the darkness disappears, it is the herald of the glorious sun. Many beautiful parallels may be drawn between the morning star and Jesus. It is not said that the victor would be made like

the morning star, but the promise is that the morning star would be given him. Hence some have supposed that some brilliant ornament, like the morning star, should be given the redeemed, to sparkle as a gem in their diadem. But there is a better explanation. The tree of life and the manna refer to the Lord Himself. He Himself is the crowning blessing. His presence makes heaven. Without Him no place could be heaven; with Him any place is heaven. All that is loveliest in creation is a faint reflection of His glory. In this same book He claims the title of the "bright and morning star." The star was always the emblem of sovereignty. Balaam, we read, saw "a star coming out of Jacob." A star led the Magi to Jesus' feet. They that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars forever. In the centre of that brilliant galaxy, giving them all their lustre and glory, will be the Lord Jesus Himself. He will impart to them His royalty. When He promises to give His victorious followers the "morning star," He promises to give them Himself in the undimmed splendor of His glorious perfections. This is your prospect, oh Christians. Act worthy of your high destiny. Trample sin and Satan under your feet, and go forward with Christ as the heirs of life and glory.

THE SARDIAN "OVERCOMETH."

5. The promise to the angel of the Sardian Church is the next in the regular order. We enter here upon a new series; the other is ended. Its consummation was reached. We now enter a new atmosphere, a new territory. This series is distinguished from the former in several marked particulars: Our Lord again assumes a title similar to the one with which the first series began. He makes a second beginning; all the promises now are

drawn from New Testament rather than Old Testament imagery, and this in a marked manner; in this series there is a looking for and hastening toward the second coming of our Lord not observable in the first; there is also a geographical distinction; but this is not in all cases very distinctly marked. Dean Trench notices here "the heptad falls, as is constantly the case, into two groups; either of three and four, as in the Lord's Prayer, or of four and three, as here. And now the scenery, if I may use the word, changes; it is not any longer of earth, but of heaven. The kingdom, not of David, but of David's Son, has come; all His foes are under His feet; His Church is not any longer contemplated as militant, but triumphant; and in the succession of the last three promises we learn that even for the Church triumphant there are steps and advances from glory to glory."

The promise to the victorious Christian here is that "he shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels" (Rev. 3 : 5). In the preceding verse there is an anticipation of this promise, "And they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy." There were some even in Sardis who had not defiled their garments; they had kept themselves "unspotted from the world." They shall have garments of more perfect whiteness. They have worn the garments of grace; they shall wear the garments of glory. There is doubtless a reference here to the white robes put on at baptism at the beginning of the Christian's walk in the Church below; now as he begins his life in the Church above, he is also to walk in white. The walking brings out the idea of the grace and dignity of the garment as well as the life and activity of the wearer. There is a worthiness which is here rec-

ognized as belonging to men—a worthiness not of merit, but of grace.

Many in the Sardian Church "had a name that they lived, and yet were dead." But there were those who had not only the name but the reality of life; their names were recorded in the Book of Life. It has been suggested that this symbolism had its origin in the political life of Egypt. It occurs first in the Bible in Exodus 32 : 32, "Blot me, I pray thee, out of Thy book which Thou hast written." Afterward it came to pass that one who was convicted of treachery to the state had his name struck from the list of citizens. He became "a man without a country." In the fierce malediction of some psalms we have the same sentiment expressed. Are there names on the page of the Book of Life which may be blotted out? This language would seem at first thought to imply as much. But, on the other side, is it not true that all who are written in the Book of Life do overcome? None who have their names written fail in the strife; none have their names blotted out. This promise includes us all who are loyal to the Lord. The names of the faithful will be found there on that great day when the books are opened. No one has the power to open the book but Christ; we are safe in His hands. The hour is coming when it will be a higher honor to have our names there than if they were ranked among the grandest names on the highest scroll of earthly fame. Is your name there? Is mine? This is a solemn question. Oh let us beseech Christ to write it there!

The further promise is that He will confess us before His Father and His angels. This reminds us of Christ's words when on earth. This is the heavenly seal to His earthly words. This epistle especially abounds in sayings which our Lord uttered on earth. This promise is the

echo of the words spoken years before, "Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 10 : 32). In Luke 12 : 8 there is an additional thought —"before the angels of God." It is a precious thought that Christ is still the same, His promises the same, His love the same. Would you know the Christ of the throne? Behold the Christ of the cross. Does His heart still beat in sympathy with the sorrowing? Behold His compassion for the widow of Nain in her great sorrow. His heart still throbs with human sympathy. He carried a human body up to the throne of His glory; that body still bears the marks of Calvary. You may trust Him. Have you confessed Him on earth? Are you ashamed now of Jesus? He will then be ashamed of you. It is shame for shame. Confess Him now, in deed as in word, as your personal Saviour, and then amid the glories of the heavenly kingdom He will confess you as His own when He makes up His jewels.

THE PHILADELPHIAN "OVERCOMETH."

6. We now come to the promise made to the Philadelphian Church. The name and history of this church must always have a peculiar interest for us. That ancient city at the foot of Mount Tmolus, on the banks of the little river Cogamus, has given its name to our own city of "brotherly love," which William Penn founded on the banks of the Delaware. The old city of Asia perpetuates its name in this noble city of America.

"Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of My God; and he shall go no more out; and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from My God; and

I will write upon him My new name" (Rev. 3 : 12). Here we rapidly advance ; we are going upward step by step ; each "overcometh" finds us higher than the last. This "pillar" does not describe some eminent position in the Church on earth ; the promise has reference to the future. Still the earthly imagery is carried to the heavenly temple. John was one of the three "who seemed to be pillars" of the mother-church in Jerusalem, as we see by Galatians 2 : 9. Now the promise is that as he had been a support to the Church on earth, so every one who overcame should be in the temple in the new Jerusalem. It is further added, "He shall go no more out." Once in he is in forever. "The doors are shut" both to include and to exclude. On earth there is the possibility of failure ; the most faithful may become faithless ; the most devoted may become careless. The old city of Philadelphia suffered greatly from earthquakes ; its temples were often shaken ; its pillars were broken and removed ; new ones had to be supplied. It is possible that this local peculiarity may have suggested this striking contrast. Here is a temple which no earthquakes can shake ; a pillar which remains forever firm. There is the most absolute certainty that the welfare of the soul in heaven can never be endangered. We may roam from world to world until all the marvels of creation shall be studied, but we shall never go out of this glorious temple. Conflicts will then be over, doubts will no more distress, fears no more annoy, sin no more alarm. Blessed are they who live and die in the Lord !

The promise is greater still, "And I will write upon him the name of My God." On the columns of many public buildings the names of distinguished men were written. He who overcomes will be recognized forever as belonging to God. Christ will write on the man the

name of his God. It will also be known that he belongs to the city of God; that he enjoys the rights and rejoices in the privileges of that heavenly citizenship. This is that heavenly city for which Abraham looked. It goes by many names. The Greek and Latin poets of the Church have vied with one another in chanting the praises of this city. Our later hymn-writers vie in turn with them in the same direction. They have spoken glorious things of this city of God. We have also later in this book a magnificent description, but we may be sure that the half has not been told us. "Now we see through a glass darkly." Here it is called the "new" Jerusalem. There are two words in Greek for new. One expresses that which is new in the sense that it had recently come into existence; the other expresses that which is new as opposed to the old and worn-out. The latter is the word used here. The other Jerusalem is soiled, stained, sinful; this new Jerusalem is clean, pure, and spotless.

Last and best of all, is the "new name" of the Lord Himself. Christ has many names. They are all unspeakably precious to His people. Each name is a revelation of some new element in His glorious character. What is this new name? Who can tell? He has many names in this Book; among them we have "The Word of God," "King of kings, and Lord of lords," but these are not the "new name." The name is not merely one that is new now, but one that will be new in the day of final triumph. Another mysterious name will be revealed; other elements of character will be displayed, and the redeemed will have fresh cause for gratitude and joy. Professor Plumptre mentions a suggestion made to him by Rev. W. Reid, of Edinburgh, as to the new name. By an inductive method of inquiry he finds that

this Book itself contains a title which had not been used before, strictly speaking, as a title of Christ. This word is used in not less than twenty-eight passages in the Book —"the Lamb." He goes on to say that the name is raised to a co-ordinate rank with God. "So used, the name gathered up into itself the humiliation and the glory, the sacrifice and the exaltation, the meekness and the gentleness of Christ, and became in very deed a name which is above every name." We do not know. For the present this is an incommunicable name. No man by searching can find out its mystery; no man is now capable of receiving it. The day is coming when it shall be known. Glorious as are Christ's precious names to us now, there will be a fuller revelation. Now we are the sons and daughters of God; we know not what we shall be, but we know that we shall see Him as He is, and be like Him, and this beatific vision of our Lord will voice itself in a name which shall express the new glory of this new revelation of Jesus Christ. The thought is entrancing. Oh Christian, how exalted are your privileges, how glorious your hopes, and how indescribable will be your realizations in the heavenly glory! Blessed Jesus, give us foretastes now of the fulness which awaits us!

THE LAODICEAN "OVERCOMETH."

7. We now come to the last and the best "overcometh." Christ always keeps the best wine for the last of the feast. He has been preparing us for this glorious climax. He swept us on to His temple in the last letter, but now He carries us to His throne. "To him that overcometh I will grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne." This is the most glorious of all

the promises, and it is to the victor in the worst of all the churches—the Laodicean. In this letter we have the severest rebukes and the tenderest invitations ; unsparing severity and yearning tenderness go side by side. This combination is characteristic of John in his gospel, his epistles, and in all the traditions ; it is equally characteristic of Jesus. It must ever be so in great natures ; it is not incompatible. Where love is strongest, reproof must be severest. Christ wounds and heals ; so must truth and love. To the worst Church is made the grandest promise ; there is hope in repentance even for the worst. It is significant to have this glorious promise come here, when we remember the character of this Church.

Christ often expressed this thought during His early life : " Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am." This promise is wonderful ; it is high, we cannot attain unto it. Before it reason staggers and imagination retires. This last promise outstrips and overlaps them all. To the apostles was the promise that they should sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel ; but here is a promise to the humblest believer that he shall sit with Christ on His throne. Oriental thrones were large ; they had room for several. In Christ's heart there is room for every returning sinner ; on Christ's throne there is room for every redeemed sinner. This highest place is within reach of the lowest child of Adam. Farther we cannot go. More than this God could neither say nor do. The series must end here. The Eternal has exhausted Himself. Could He do more ? Can you imagine anything beyond ? Tell me, what more could God do for you ? The thought of this glory is overwhelming. Oh to lie at Jesus' feet would be heaven ; to see " the King in His

beauty," even at a great distance, would be heaven ; but to sit on His throne—it is too much ; we have no thought to conceive, far less language to express this indescribable honor. Christ so loves us that He longs for us to be by His side ; He longs to show us His glory. When He was on earth men could not, would not, see His glory. Oh Christ, Thou shalt see of the travail of Thy soul, and Thou shalt be satisfied ; we shall see Thy glory, and awake in Thy likeness, and we shall be satisfied. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

Remember now, as we close, that only "to him that overcometh" are these promises applicable. Christ is enthroned with the Father, because He overcame. We are to be enthroned with Christ if we overcome. This word "overcome" has great prominence here. It has all through John's writings. To "overcome" the wicked one was to give his young men their proudest eulogy. Again he says, "that which is born of God 'overcometh' the world ;" and "this is the victory that 'overcometh' the world, even our faith." You look in vain in the writings of others for this word in this sense, and with such frequency. Did I say it was John's word? Rather say it is Jesus' word. He now gave it to John ; and it is now the echo of His own word when in the flesh, "I have 'overcome' the world." Luther said it was worth going from Rome to Jerusalem on one's knees to find that text. These words have given strength and courage to every Christian soldier ; Christ, the Captain of our salvation, has overcome ; so may we. Satan is more than a match for us ; he is less than a match for Jesus. Men and women, you can overcome ; you must overcome. I summon you to the conflict ; I promise you the victory in our victorious Christ. On, on, to the fight. Once young men overcame the wicked one.

They stood where Adam fell. Let the zephyrs whisper it; let the tornadoes thunder it. Before this victory the glories of Alexander and Cæsar fade and disappear. Enlist now under the banner of Christ; and then, at the last, you and I, having come off more than conquerors through Him that loved us, shall—oh unspeakable bliss—sit down with Christ on His throne!

VI.

CHRIST A LIVING STONE.

"To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious."—1 PETER 2 : 4.

WE have in this verse a striking description of our adorable Redeemer. The term "living stone" is appropriate to Christ, because He hath life in Himself, and He is the Author of all life. He diffuses and sustains life. He laid down His life, and He took it up again; no man had power to take it from Him. This prerogative He received from His Father. He is the conqueror of death. He not only gives resurrection and life; He is "the Resurrection and the Life."

CHRIST THE SURE FOUNDATION.

The first thought, then, suggested by this text is that Christ, a "living stone," is the foundation of all our hopes for time and for eternity. Without Christ the Bible is meaningless, without Christ the world is hopeless, without Christ heaven is charmless. You might as well have a summer without a gleam of light, without the smell of flowers, or the song of a bird, as have a life without Jesus Christ. You might as well have a year without a summer, nothing but bleakness, barrenness, and death, as to have a life without Jesus Christ. You might as well have a night without a morning, as to live in this world and die and be buried without Jesus Christ. I do not know what men do who have no Saviour; I do

not know of what they speak, when they do not speak of Christ; I do not know of what they think if Christ is not in all their thoughts. Christ is the glory of the world; He is the bliss of heaven. Christ is the Alpha and Omega, in revelation, in creation, and in redemption. Christ spoke and there was light; without Him was not anything made that was made. Christ gives significance, beauty, and glory to the entire Bible. We are told of a shield that was made in ancient times; and the maker so wrought his name into the substance of it, that, in order to remove the name, the shield would have to be destroyed. So the name of Christ is written into the revelation of God, from the first majestic words of Genesis, to the last love-notes of Revelation; and in order to remove Christ's name and glory, you must destroy this revelation of God. Precisely so is it to the reverent eye and ear in God's Book of creation. The thoughtful student sees Christ's name, sees Christ's handiwork all over the creation of God. He may not, perhaps, go so far as did Hugh Miller, when he declared that he found the cross in the rock; but he may find the truth symbolized by that cross all over the works of God's hand.

It has been said that "an undevout astronomer is mad." We may say that all undevout scientists are mad. There can be no true science which excludes Jesus Christ. You might as well speak of the astronomy of the world and leave out the sun, as speak of history, philosophy, and creation, and leave out Jesus Christ. In Christ and in Him alone, the real and the ideal meet. There is a great difference between a man's actual and a man's ideal. The ideal must be high, the real often falls far below the ideal. As are a man's ideals, so, to a great extent, shall the man be. He can never attain to

CHRIST REJECTED BY MANY.

The second truth taught us by this Scripture is that men in general refuse, reject Jesus Christ, the Son of God. The Apostle Peter was an honest man. He was familiar with the tendency of thought among the people of whom himself was a part. He knew the conclusions reached by the great majority of his kinsmen according to the flesh ; he feels bound, as an honest man, to declare that men generally reject Jesus Christ. This is clearly taught us in the text, " To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men." This, I say, he felt bound frankly to confess. He will avow the shame and humiliation of the cross ; he will not only avow it, but he will glory in it. Men despise and reject Christ. This has been seen all along the line of revelation. This was clearly foretold by Isaiah more than seven hundred years before Christ was born. He tells us that " He is despised and rejected of men ; a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, and we hid, as it were, our faces from Him. " He tells us also that " He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground ;" that " He hath no form nor comeliness." What Isaiah foretold was literally fulfilled in the event of Christ's birth. He was rejected in the inn ; He filled a cradle in the manger, but even then the glory of His character was seen. A star marked a new pathway in the sky to honor the infant Redeemer. Shepherds, watching their flocks by night, heard the sweetest music that earth has ever known, on the night that Christ was born, when angels chanted His birth-song ; and wise men from the East brought their treasures of gold, frankincense, and myrrh and laid them at

His feet. Herod felt his throne totter beneath him. This is marvellous!

Christ has always divided the world. He reveals character; He makes men declare themselves; He is the touchstone that draws worth and develops worthlessness. Come near to Christ, and if you have the elements of nobility you will be drawn toward Him, if you are worthless you will hate Him. There never was such a power in this universe as Christ and His holy religion to develop these contradictory elements in the human race. He has gone through the world as an incarnate conscience; still, He is ever drawing poor penitents to Himself, bringing them out of the lowest dregs of society. Penitents who have tears to wash His feet, and hair to wipe them—His benediction was upon such. Christ aroused the bitterest wrath of the Pharisees. He has evoked the tenderest love and the bitterest hate. He was no negative force in the world. When Christ came there were more active demons than ever before in the world. We are not surprised to learn that legions were cast out of a single man. And just in proportion as Christ is prominent in a man's life shall all the elements of evil be aroused to oppose His indwelling. This is inevitable. Men rejected Him at His birth; men cleaved to Him at His birth. He separated them. He drew them with cords of love stronger than hooks of steel, or drove them from Him because they would not endure His purity and power. This was seen all through His life. His entrance upon His public ministry was in perfect harmony with His entrance into the world. His birth into the Church was in sympathy with His birth in the manger. Even His family did not believe in Him; they found it hard to recognize in Him the Messiah of prophecy.

And Christ is still dividing men into two classes. He has taught us that "he who is not with Me is against Me." I could go through this audience and pick out men and women who love Him more than all besides, more than property, more than husband or wife, more than mother, or father, or child, more than life itself. I speak the truth; there sit in these pews men and women who would walk into yonder street and lay their heads on the block for Jesus; who would stand by the stake while fagot was lighting and flames were kindling; men and women from whose lips would come songs of joy and shouts of victory as they marched to the block or the stake. Not long ago two gentlemen were attending service as you are this morning. On their return from church, one said to the other, "What do you think of Him?" The other answered, "I thought he was pretty dull." Then the first said, "I was not speaking of the preacher; I was speaking of his and my Lord. What did God say from the clouds regarding His Son? '*Hear ye Him.*' I was speaking of Him. He is to me the 'chiefest among ten thousand, the One altogether lovely.' What do you think of Him?" That man was obliged to reply: "I have never given serious thought to the subject." He has his representatives in this audience. "What think ye of Christ?" This is the greatest question of time or eternity. That man is standing on holy ground who is brought face to face with Jesus Christ and with his own duty regarding the Son of God. If that duty has never been pressed upon you before, I press it upon you this morning. What think you of Christ? I ask you, men; I ask you, women. I put this before you; you must settle this question, What will you do with Jesus this morning?

Perhaps there are those who positively reject Him.

It seems incredible! Why do you reject Christ? What is there in Jesus that has led you to come to that conclusion? How would you have Jesus differ in order that you might accept Him? I think that is a fair question. I have a right to put that question to you. Give God an honest answer. Will you tell me one thing in the whole life of Christ which makes Him obnoxious to your love and faith? Was He not holiness itself? Was He not the Champion of purity? When all men dragged woman in the dust, did not Christ stand for her? Did He not stand for humanity, freedom, and right? Did He not take children into His arms and bless them? Is He not the representative of all that is noblest in the mind and the heart? Has not the whole world put the crown of perfect humanity upon the brow of the Son of Mary—the Son of God? I ask you for which of these things do you condemn Jesus Christ? Come to me at the close of this service and tell me for which of these things you condemn Jesus Christ. Tell me, if you can, what He lacked in order to secure your faith—what He possessed which makes it impossible for you to believe in Him? I beseech you by all that is sacred and noble, be not of those by whom "He is disallowed."

A STARTLING CONTRAST.

Now, I ask you to observe, still further, that we have brought out here a startling contrast—God's judgment of Christ as compared with that of men. "Disallowed, indeed, of men, but chosen of God and precious," or honorable, as we have it in the New Version. Here, then, is God's judgment of Christ, as distinguished from the decisions of men. God knew Him, and He knew God as it is impossible for men to know Him; and this is the judgment which God here gives. It was quite a com-

mon thing for Peter to contrast the treatment which Christ received from men with the treatment He received from God. In one of his sermons in connection with Pentecost, he says, "Whom ye crucified and slew; whom God raised from the dead." This statement here is quite in harmony with the line of thought which the apostle often pursues, bringing into striking contrast God's treatment and man's. God chose Him from all eternity: He was elect; He was precious, honorable. Oh, how God loved His only begotten Son! I may not enter upon this profound mystery! I may not go into that region, dark by excess of light! But I do know that when John, who pillowed his head upon the bosom of Jesus, speaks about the Son having dwelt in the bosom of the Father, he meant much. There have been tender relationships between God the Father and God the Son from all eternity. It has been supposed that in that statement in Genesis where we have it, "Let us make man," there was a conference on the part of the Triune God, in reference to the creation of man. I would not give the passage as proof of the Trinity, but only as a hint. Similar hints are scattered all along the Old Testament narrative. I do not know that it is possible for God to be, if He have not objects of love. Love must have an opportunity of manifesting itself; it must have objects on which to rest. Well, I think you ought to take Christ at God's estimate; you ought to give Christ the honor which God the Father gives Him. In the eternal councils, God chose Him; in the fulness of time He came as a child, and then dwelt as a man among men. He had come before; there were temporary incarnations before, but this was *the* incarnation. The human race was to be uplifted. It is a marvellous fact that God tabernacled among men.

God loved Him. Here comes in the mystery of the cross—that God should have turned away His face. It is certain that Christ never was so dear, and yet God withdrew His face from Him. God hates sin. He must show His displeasure and wrath wherever sin is found; and so He hid His face from His beloved Son. In that act I see more of the love of God than I can see displayed elsewhere in all the revelation He has made. Why should you not give Him the honor which God does?

COMING TO CHRIST.

And now, will you let me close by simply saying, that in order to receive the blessing of Christ's life, we must come to Him. "To whom coming as unto a living stone." We see that "as unto" is in italics; in the Revised Version both words are omitted. It is not "as a living stone," but this—"to whom coming, a living stone;" and in order that your feet may rest upon that stone, you must place them there. Perhaps you simply resist this power; you have felt it drawing you. This sermon is one of the influences which God gives to draw you to His Son. You have been holding back; you have been stiff-necked, refusing to submit. God's promise includes God's condition; and if you will not keep the condition, I say it reverently, you make it impossible for God to keep the promise. Each includes the other. You shall not have Christ for your foundation if you will not *come*. Come this morning. Is there a follower of Christ in this house who has wandered? come back now. Perhaps like Peter you have been tempted; perhaps the sneer of some sceptic, or the smile of some foolish woman, has made you deny your Lord. Perhaps, in the gray dawn of some chilly morning, you have gone out

denying Him, but weeping bitterly. Come back to Him this morning, and He will graciously receive and abundantly pardon you.

Perhaps there are some who have never come. You must seek Jesus Christ to-day. Come to Him that you may know Him as your personal Saviour. These summer congregations are to me a great joy and a great responsibility. I have the opportunity, in the Providence of God, to speak to those I am not accustomed to address; you are here from many States of our Union. This congregation now met, will never meet just the same again. You come, you go. We shall meet at the judgment-seat of Christ. Oh, if you reject Him now, He must reject you then! This may be the turning-point. If you say, depart, now; He must say, depart, then. God forbid, for Jesus' sake.

VII.

NOT WEARY IN WELL-DOING.

"And let us not be weary in well-doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."—Gal. 6:9.

Three different nations or tribes inhabited Galatia. Their heathenism had been of a peculiarly gross and debasing kind. Tall and imposing in person, and impetuous in their attacks, they were dangerous foes; but they formed a special attachment to the Apostle Paul, who had, as it would seem, first preached the Gospel to them. Their first love to him and to the truth was ardent and demonstrative. They were ready, the apostle reminds them, to pluck out their eyes and to give them to him, if that were possible; but he also, in a tone of mingled authority and sorrow, expresses his wonder that they were so soon drawn away to another gospel than that which he had preached. They were warm-hearted but fickle. They needed the word of rebuke and encouragement implied in the text. In our need of this word we are all Galatians. We run well for a season, and then we hesitate, droop, and loiter. Let us take these instructive and encouraging words as our own to-day.

AN INSPIRED STANDARD.

1. We have here an inspired standard for a noble life —"well-doing." Many never attempt to come up to this standard. Such a thought has never suggested itself to their minds. There are thousands in all our cities

who were born in sinful and wretched homes, and whose companions and surroundings all tended to drag them down ; they have scarcely known a pure thought, felt a noble aspiration, or made even one effort in the direction of well-doing. Such people are to be blamed ; they are to be pitied also. But go higher up in the scale of life, and you may find the same absence of such a standard. There are homes in which wealth abounds, and culture is possessed, and yet there is no thought of well-doing. Self is supreme. As compared with that of the former class, this is doubtless a refined selfishness ; but it is nevertheless selfishness, and selfishness is the essence of sin. Living for self is abominable idolatry. The man who so lives is dead while he lives.

No doubt all of us fall far below this lofty standard given by Paul. There never was but one life which perfectly reached this standard. What a suggestive description we have of Christ where it is said of Him "Who went about doing good !" This simple and sublime description brings before us a picture of unceasing activity and unchanging benevolence. This element in Christ's life gives Him power even to this hour. Good deeds never die. Those who imitate the example of Christ in well-doing may for a time be despised and rejected, but eventually they will receive their reward. It is still true that "the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance." The names of the three noble Hebrews who for truth and for God went into the fiercely-heated furnace are written forever on the sacred page. The names of "the most mighty men" who cast them into the furnace were never recorded ; the furious flames "slew" their persons. "The memory of the just is blessed ; but the name of the wicked shall rot."

Although we may not reach the high standard which

Paul gives us, and which Christ illustrated, it is well to aim for it. Emerson, in a very Emersonian phrase, says, "Young man, hitch your wagon to a star." We catch his meaning. It is good advice. In the Royal Gallery at Dresden, that gallery so rich in the triumphs of art, is the matchless Madonna of Raphael. An entire room is devoted to that wonderful creation of genius. For hours students and lovers of art gaze upon it. They depart but to return and gaze again on this master-piece. No artist can hope to approach, far less to excel it; but it is a constant inspiration to every true student to loftier endeavors. No sculptor expects to rival Praxiteles, but even the traditions of the immortal Greek give enthusiasm to his humblest imitator. Let us aim at the stars, and we may hit the tree-tops. This endeavor brings joy. We have too much exaggerated the trials of the Christian life. We, as Christians, need give up only what it is harmful to keep. We give up what the sick man gives up when the flush of health again mantles his cheek. We give up what the prisoner does when the prison-door is thrown open, and he breathes again the air of freedom. There is joy in this lofty aim. The Christian looks to the end of his course for his full reward, but he has a glorious reward in peace and love even here. Many a transgressor finds his way through sin to death and perdition tenfold harder than does the Christian in striving to follow Christ in well-doing. Life is short, but it determines our eternity. It projects itself into an unending future. Short as is a cannon, its direction when discharged determines the course of the ball. Only "well-doing" here receives the "well-done" there.

> "He lives who lives to God alone,
> And all are dead beside."

A DANGER SUGGESTED.

2. The apostle suggests a danger to which we are exposed—"Let us not be weary in well-doing." We are all liable to weariness in doing good. The infirmities of the flesh often make us weary. We are in the body. We are of the earth, earthy. We are subject to the limitations and conditions of our earthly life. Here, as everywhere, the example of Christ is helpful. He knows what weariness means; He has felt the same. No laboring man was ever more exhausted than was Jesus when He laid His head upon the pillow in the hinder part of the ship and slept. A sleeping Christ! How marvellous the thought! It had been a day of exciting and exhausting toil with Jesus, whichever view of the incident, and its place in the narrative, we may take. Jesus was physically weary in well-doing; and He slept, although the spray may have dashed into His face and bedewed His hair. He slept, although fear had unmanned the disciples so long inured to the dangers of the lake. We know that on another occasion Christ was "wearied with His journey," and He "sat thus"—thus wearied—"on the well." Still, He embraced the opportunity to talk to the sinful woman of Samaria of the water of life. Yes, often we are weary in, but never of, the work to which we are called.

The ingratitude of those we strive to help is another cause of weariness. Ingratitude is as common as it is detestable. Almost all nations have voiced their sense of the sin of ingratitude in striking proverbs: "Eat the present, and break the dish," says the Arabic proverb. The Spanish says, "Bring up a raven, and it will peck out your eyes." "Put a snake in your bosom, and when it is warm it will sting you," says the English prov-

erb. The world is ungrateful. It lives on God's bounty, and yet refuses to own His power or to accept His love. "Where are the nine?" asked Christ; and there is a tone of indescribable sadness in His question. To do some men the favor they solicit is to make them ever after your cold friends or your open enemies. When love turns to hate, no hate is so bitter. It is said that the man who severed Cicero's head from his body, the leader of the assassins, was one whom Cicero's wonderful eloquence had successfully defended, when on trial for the murder of his father. We have all felt the deadening influence of ingratitude. Our warm sympathy has flowed out in words and deeds of helpfulness, and that sympathy has been so chilled by the ingratitude and unworthiness of those we helped, that it has flowed back to paralyze our hearts. But we must do good from higher motives than to secure the gratitude of those benefited. We must do it for its own sake and for Christ's sake. He laid down His life for us when we were unthankful. Thank God, there are some who are grateful. We have seen the tear of gratitude tremble in the eye, and when it was wiped away we have seen the light of hope sparkle there. A word of kindness has banished from some weary heart and sorrowful home weeks of sadness, and has opened a future of hopefulness. Do not become morose. Do not say that gratitude is a forgotten virtue. A cynic is almost as bad as an ingrate. Indeed, cynicism and ingratitude are kin to each other. In many cases your words and deeds of well-doing are bearing precious fruit in the changed homes and the redeemed lives of men, women, and children, who shall rise up to call you blessed.

3. Our apparent want of success is another cause for weariness. There is so much to be done, that we are

sometimes disposed to give up in despair. Where shall we begin? How can we do anything? Much of the labor which has been performed seems wasted. Then there is so much opposition to contend against. This opposition often comes from those whom we wish to benefit, to lift from sin to holiness and heaven. Sometimes it comes from cold-hearted Christians. It is so easy to criticise; so easy to charge those who are willing to work with being visionary, impracticable, fanatical. It is so hard to help men who have no sense of their need of our help. One cannot help sometimes remembering our Lord's words about casting pearls before swine. City authorities oppose you. They issued some time ago their orders to muzzle dogs, and we were glad. They still license saloons, and we are sorry; for while the rabid dog may occasionally destroy its man, the death-dealing saloon destroys its thousands. What is to be done with the great masses of the unchurched? What can be done to prevent the shameful desecration of God's holy day by the hundred thousand people who make up the Sunday excursions? And even of those who attend the house of God, why is it that so few accept the offers of the Gospel? There are times when we cannot help asking such questions. Then, again, many who apparently have accepted Christ run well for a season, then fall back in, or entirely out of the Christian race. You have seen a man redeemed from his cups and other vices. Prayers of gratitude for his deliverance were offered; songs of joy were sung. You have seen him again in his place in business and society, his home a paradise, his wife radiant with joy, and his children transformed almost beyond recognition. Your own heart leaps for joy. You glory in the bliss of well-doing. Earth is to you a foretaste of heaven. You almost cry

Christ, because it was always in His power to give joy for sorrow, sight for blindness, health for sickness, life for death. You have actually had a holy jealousy of Christ's power. How glorious life is to you! But one day when you come home, this man's wife meets you. Her face is stained with tears, her eyes are red with weeping, her heart is nearly broken with sorrow. She does not speak. She need not. You know the story. Yes, he has been drinking for a week. He is a demon. To her and her children life seems hopeless, and death would be welcome. Or, perhaps, it is a disobedient son or an infatuated daughter you tried to save, and with equally sad results. I am giving history, not romance. Tell me, Christian worker, have you not sometimes been so weary that you have thought, if you have not said, "It is enough, O Lord. I give up, I will never try again?" Not so fast, brother, sister; be patient. Have you done your duty? Rest there.

AN ENCOURAGING PROMISE.

3. We have also in the text an encouraging promise. But a condition is also suggested. We must not faint. We must persevere to the end. There must be no repining, no retreating, no fainting. We enlist for life, for eternity, indeed. The dew of youth, the vigor of manhood, and the wisdom of age must be consecrated to well-doing. It is "to them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory, and honor, and immortality," that the promise of blessedness is given. Then let us not forget that God must be the judge of the "due time." We are often in a hurry; God never is. Perhaps the greatest miracle in Christ's life is that He should wait thirty years before performing a miracle. He bided His time. Undue haste pays the penalty of speedy de-

cay. Did we know all the reasons as God knows them we should always approve of His seeming delay. How few converts, apparently, there were in Christ's personal ministry! but one sermon on the day of Pentecost brings three thousand to Jesus' feet. Soon the number increased so rapidly that Luke ceases to give us figures. Carey and his companions must labor seven years before the first Hindoo convert is baptized. Judson must toil on until the churches grow disheartened, and everything but his own faith and God's promise fails. In a single recent year eighteen thousand are baptized in connection with our Baptist work on these same foreign fields! These things are not accidental. They have their reasons. We cannot always trace the law. God can. Let us do our duty, and leave the result with Him.

But complying with the conditions of God success is certain. What is success? Not all which either the world or the Church calls by that name. Much which neither the world nor the Church so calls is success. We remember the oft-quoted incident at Waterloo. At the crisis in the battle when all depended on the firmness of the soldiers, messenger after messenger came into the presence of the Duke of Wellington, urging that the troops at an important point be withdrawn, as they must soon yield before the terrible onsets of the French. The only reply the duke returned was, "Stand firm." The officer remonstrated, "We shall all perish." Again the iron-hearted duke said, "Stand firm." "You'll find us there," said the officer as he galloped away. Every man, it is said, of that doomed brigade fell fighting at his post. They did their duty. That is success. Going up Fifth Avenue to the grounds of the new cathedral a little time ago, we saw a workman carving part of a floral design on stone. "Where is this stone to be put, and

what will be the design when complete?" "I don't know," said he; "my business is to transfer this pattern to this stone; the master-workman knows the rest." He was doing good work. He did his duty. That was success. To-day that stone adorns some lofty arch. The parts are joined, a complete and beautiful whole is the result. In one of our papers some chapters were published some time ago of a history soon to be written, entitled, "The Fall of Slavery." Some parts of that chapter are thrilling. Behold the aged Benjamin Lundy travelling on foot, with his staff in hand, and his pack on his back, through winter's winds and snow on his journeys from Baltimore, Md., to Bennington, Vt. He goes to talk with the young and brave William Lloyd Garrison of the sin of slavery and the hope of freedom. The winds which sweep the lofty ranges of the Green Mountains come to these two men as the dirges of slavery's "Miserere;" they go from them laden with the notes of freedom's "Te Deum." But what sowing of tears and blood, before the sheaves of freedom are gathered! Behold Mr. Garrison dragged through the streets of Boston with a rope about his neck. Could the prospects of freedom be darker? Surely he will faint with weariness. But that man lived to see the last chain of the last slave melted in the fires of battle, and to hear the winds which sweep over every mountain and valley of a redeemed nation chanting liberty's jubilee. I have referred to the Duke of Wellington. It is a noticeable fact that in his despatches, which fill twelve large volumes, the word "glory" never appears; not even after his greatest victories, but always the word "duty," "duty." The word "glory" predominates in all of Napoleon's despatches. This characteristic of Wellington is to be traced to the lesson he learned, as he himself

tells us, in youth from his catechism, the lesson "of doing your duty in that station of life to which it shall please God to call you." That is success. Reap that. God will care for the other certain harvests.

To-day I summon you to duty. Through winter's cold and summer's heat stand firm. Do your work. Some will remain at home during the summer; others will be away. Wherever you are be true to Christ. Display the banner. Let "well-doing" be your standard. Never be weary, so as to neglect duty. Know that as God's promise is sure, "We shall reap." Know that "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."

Weary one, the everlasting arm is about you. Worldlings may faint. Christians never. "Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."

VIII.

SAD SOWING—GLAD REAPING.

"He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." —Psa. 126 : 6.

This Psalm was doubtless composed with reference to the return from the Babylonish captivity. The first group of colonists had returned. The permission to return was so unexpected, and all the circumstances were so providential, that when they actually found themselves in the land of their hopes and prayers they were like those that dreamed. It seemed too good to be true. God had interposed in a marvellous way, and their highest hopes were more than realized. With thoughts like these the Psalm opens. But the Psalmist goes on, and represents the returned colonists as offering earnest prayer for those left behind. As a matter of fact they came back in various groups. Some came under Cyrus, some under Darius, and still others under Xerxes and his successors. As Perowne has observed, the first arrivals were but as a trickling rill amid the desert wastes; so the prayer bursts from the Psalmist's lips that God would send them back as mighty streams swollen by the winter rains. During their absence the land was neglected. It was overgrown with weeds, and the seed had not been sown. Still, faith could overcome these difficulties. The joy of harvest would more than repay the sorrow of sowing. And so in the fifth verse of the Psalm he says,

"They that sow in tears shall reap in joy." The text is just an expansion of the thought contained in the fifth verse. In the text the singular is substituted for the plural in order to make the individual sower more distinct. In presenting this subject we shall give two pictures, which we shall entitle "The Outgoing Sower and the Incoming Reaper."

I

1. First picture—"The Outgoing Sower." These pictures are not given in the text simply in outline. The Psalmist, with the pen of inspiration, has completely filled in all their parts. Let us follow him in this inspired description. The first element of the description is expressed in the words, "He that goeth forth." There is here a literal, a verbal accuracy. We know that in that ancient time and Oriental land the harvest fields were often at a great distance from the husbandman's humble home. Sometimes he was obliged to go six or eight miles distant in order to reach the ground which he cultivated. Large companies, for purposes of mutual protection, went out in the early dawn from their homes and returned again as the evening shades were falling. Often these farmers were obliged to protect themselves by deadly weapons as they went to or returned from their fields. Something similar to this was seen in Europe during the Middle Ages. It was literal truth, then, in our Lord's parable when He said, "Behold, a sower went forth to sow." Spiritually this is true always and everywhere. The sincere sower of the good seed of the kingdom must leave the ranks of ordinary church members. It must be sadly admitted that the rank and file of church workers do but little aggressive work for the Master. The earnest seeker for souls must be willing to step out from and far in advance of the line which the average worker reaches. Take out of our very best

churches a score or more of earnest workers, and little seed would be sown and few harvests reaped. Every man who has been conspicuously successful for Christ has been willing and even obliged to go forth and sow. Often, too, such workers must find new fields of Christian enterprise. In doing this they may have to incur the odium of indifferent church members. When Carey, our great Baptist missionary, arose from his shoemaker's bench, inspired with holy love and fired by Christian zeal for the heathen, even so good a man as Dr. Ryland could say to him, "Sit down, young man; when God intends to convert the heathen He can do it without you or me." Something of the same spirit manifests itself on the part of extremely conservative men to-day. Work in tents and halls has had to bear a secret dislike, if not open opposition, from many who bear the Christian name. But men who know the constraining love of Christ, and who feel the value of immortal souls, must not fear the opposition. Conscious of the divine call they must be willing to go forth and sow the precious seed in the Master's name. If they feel that God is with them, that God is sending them, they will not fear opposition; and they may be assured that they will yet return with rejoicing, bringing their sheaves with them.

2. The next element in the picture is that the sower is represented as weeping. The language here is very strong. One commentator puts it in this form, "may indeed weep every step that he goes." It has also been rendered, "takes no step of his way without weeping." The double infinitive is employed "to mark the continuance of the action." There is also a literal and verbal accuracy in this strong language. Sometimes the scarcity of the seed makes the sower well-nigh a weeper as he scatters it in the furrow. The harvests of the previous

year have been poor. By the exercise of great economy the humble husbandman has enabled his family to subsist through the year. What shall he now do? Not to sow the seed is to have no bread for the coming year; but to sow it is like taking the bread out of his children's mouths for the present year. This is the sower's trying position. We know that sometimes the government has been obliged to step in and furnish seed-corn, even as in the days of Joseph in Egypt. In all of this there is much to make sowing sad work. But, again, the extreme danger to which the sower was exposed made his labor one of sadness. As Dr. Thomson tells us in "The Land and The Book," the sower was often obliged to drop the plough and seize the sword. His fields, as we have already seen, were far from his home, and so near the lawless desert. As in Job's day, when the oxen were ploughing and the asses feeding beside them, the Sabeans came and took them all away, so often since fierce hordes from the deserts have swept down upon the peaceful husbandman, and robbed him of seed and implements, sparing only his life. In all of this there was much to make the work of sowing also a work of weeping.

But still again, the frequent fruitlessness of the labor made it sad toil. The land had gone to weeds. The ground was fallow. It was no easy task to break up this stubborn soil. Their once fruitful land was barren, and its cultivation was a work of the utmost toil. Their implements were poor and inefficient; their oxen were small and weak, and their own skill very unlike that of the farmer of modern days. For these and similar reasons the literal sowing of the seed might be called a work of weeping. The spiritual sower has also his times of sadness. He is often saddened because of the barrenness and deadness of his own heart. When he remembers

the matchless love of Christ for him and others, when he remembers the value of an immortal soul, when he looks upon the insensibility of men without God and without hope in the world, he may well weep day and night. Often his prayer has been, "Oh that my head were waters, and my eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!" He is also saddened because of the indifference of many Christians about him. They bear the name of Christ but fail to possess the spirit of Christ. "He went about doing good." They do not follow in His footsteps. Weary with His journey, and oppressed by the heat of the noonday sun, He is still able to sow the precious seed at Jacob's well; but many who now profess to be His followers grow weary in well-doing and utterly abandon the task. The sower of the spiritual seed is often saddened, too, because so much of it falls in unfruitful soil. When he has sown it with prayers and tears, and expects to reap a harvest of souls for the glory of his Master, he discovers with unspeakable sadness that some of it has fallen by the wayside, and the fowls of the air have taken away the good seed; while still other seed has fallen into stony places, and by and by the sun of persecution destroys the tender blade; while other seed is choked by the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches. These things sadden the sower's heart. When one runs well for a season and then falls out of the way, a sword pierces the sower's heart.

3. There is, however, marvellous power in this element of tenderness in seed-sowing. I have known farmers who wished for a speedy growth, to steep the seed in water before they put it into the ground. When sown it was ready at once to sprout, because of this previous

preparation. When men can baptize the good seed of the kingdom in their tears and prayers, they may expect soon to see it spring up and bring forth fruit, some thirty, some sixty, and some an hundredfold. This was an element of power in the life of the Lord Himself. To what times do we look in Christ's life as occasions which most powerfully move us? Is it to the wonderful displays of His power when He hushed the raging storm, and the wind ceased and the sea became a pavement of adamant? or shall we see Him in a still greater display of His power? The war in the human breast is wilder than that which sweeps over the ocean's surface. Christ will prove His power, not only over this war of the elements, but He will bring peace to the raging storm in a human soul. The man who had lived among the tombs, who had made the way impassable, who had cut himself with stones, who had broken chains as if they had been ropes of sand, is seen clothed, sitting in his right mind at Jesus' feet. These displays of power awaken our enthusiasm and stir our tender emotions. But not here shall Christ most move the world's heart. The tears of Jesus have melted men's hearts through all the centuries. Three times during His earthly life did He weep. The first two instances are recorded in the gospels; for the last instance we must go to the letter to the Hebrews. The first were tears of family friendship; the second were tears of patriotic fervor; the last were tears of sacrificial love. The first tears were a rill that flowed for an afflicted family, when Christ wept at the grave of Lazarus; the second were a rivulet streaming forth for a doomed nation, when He beheld Jerusalem and wept over it; the third were a mighty river that has swept across the world, when He bowed in Gethsemane "with strong crying and tears" for a world's woe. This ele-

ment of tenderness gives power to every Christian effort to-day. There is often more power in a warm grasp of the hand, in the tremulous voice, and in the tearful eye, than in the thunders of eloquence and the arguments of logic. Just at this point many workers for Christ are shorn of their power. They are stately and cold. They lack the sympathy which is born of love for Christ and for the souls of men. If we are to draw men with the cords of a man, we must have the bands of true Christian love. Oh, for that kindness which comes from communion with Christ, and appreciation of the value and loss of immortal souls! He who sows the precious seed in this spirit shall reap the golden harvest. We remember an incident which illustrates this thought. An earnest Christian was very anxious for the conversion of a sceptical blacksmith. He determined to visit him in his shop; he would fill his mouth with convincing arguments and thus refute all the blacksmith's positions. He came. His heart was overflowing with love for his neighbor's soul. He took him by the hand; but his emotions choked his utterance except to say, "I am greatly concerned for your soul." He could say no more. It was enough. The arrow went home. "Concerned for my soul; then I ought to be concerned," thought the convicted sinner. Soon he was consulting with his Christian wife; soon he was journeying to his friend's house a burdened and seeking sinner. That night they knelt together at Jesus' feet, and the sceptic found joy and peace in believing. He could not resist his neighbor's loving solicitude. Love is the best logic. It furnishes unanswerable arguments. Gentleness is greatness; meekness is mightiness. Oh for Christ's tenderness!

4. Another element in this picture is that the sower goeth

forth bearing precious seed. The idea suggested by the word "precious" is not found in the original word. The seed is precious, however, both in its literal and spiritual sense. Strictly speaking, it is a draught or a drawing of seed that is here mentioned. It has sometimes been called the "seed-basket." It is as much seed as the sower can take in the vessel he carries, or in the folds of the robe which he wears. In literal sowing often as much depends upon the nature of the seed as the character of the soil. It is certainly not otherwise in spiritual life. This seed is the Word ; this is the good seed of the kingdom. Nothing but this good seed can save men. The woman in the parable might have put something else than leaven into the meal. It might have been a nugget of gold ; it might have been a valuable diamond, but it never would have leavened the meal. So here ; whatever else men sow, if it be not this precious seed there shall be no harvest of joy. All of us have listened to sermons ten thousand of which would never convert a soul. Had God converted souls under such preaching it would be putting a premium on the preaching of error. Many of us know preachers who, themselves, there is reason to fear, do not know the power of God's grace. They were set apart by their parents to preach the Gospel, as other members of the family were set apart to practise law or medicine, or to enter some line of business. It was merely a profession. The case of such a man comes to me as I speak. In Scotland his parents designated him to the ministry in this spirit. For forty years he preached in one pulpit. A revival would have startled him and his people more than an earthquake. Seldom, except when there were revivals in other churches, were there additions to his church. He did sow some seed, but it was so wrapped up in the cold

formalities of lifeless dogmas that a harvest could not be expected, and certainly was not secured. We must know Christ as our personal Saviour, as teachers in Sunday-schools, as workers in missions, and as preachers in the pulpit. Our own hearts must glow with Christian love, and out of the abundance of this glowing heart our glad lips must speak. How can men tell others of Christ except they know Him for themselves? Surely if the blind lead the blind both must fall into the ditch. We want at this hour what a Chinese convert told his missionary that his people needed—"Men with hot hearts to tell us of the love of Christ." A thought suggests itself here which may possibly seem fanciful to some, and yet to me it comes naturally out of the figure employed. The drawing of the seed, as the Word implies, was as much as the sower carried with him in his basket or robe, from the seed-pile in the storehouse. Is it not true, spiritually, that the sower can only sow what he carries with him in his own brain, and in his own heart? He cannot sow the seed from the storehouse of God's Word except he has first taken it into his own mind and heart. There are truths which no man can understand except as he has felt his way through them. He must by a happy experience know something of the deep things of God's Word before he can lead others into its profound depths. There can be no power in merely mechanical or professional preaching, whether by pastor, teacher, or other Christian worker. Only that which you can tell from experience is really your own of God's truth. May this inspired picture of the sower live in our thoughts, and be reproduced in our lives! May each one of us go forth weeping, bearing this precious and divine seed, sowing it with faith and hope in the hearts of our fellow-men! We need for the highest success the "blood earnestness"

born of intense conviction, and inspired by Christ's constraining love.

II. 2. The second picture—"The Incoming Reaper."

We have here in the Hebrew a striking form of expression. It is the combination of the finite tense with the infinitive; it is difficult in our idiom to bring out the exact thought. In some versions it is rendered, "Coming, He shall come." This, however, Dr. Alexander says, "conveys neither the peculiar form nor the precise sense of the Hebrew phrase." Luther's repetition of the finite tense, most scholars are agreed, gives us the best approximation to the force of the original, "He shall come, He shall come." The certainty of His coming again is the thought; this our common version, with its "shall doubtless come again," clearly teaches. This is the first element in this second picture. The tearful sower shall become the joyful reaper. Of this there can be no doubt. There is a law of spiritual as truly as of natural agriculture. No good word spoken for or of God is spoken in vain. For the past few years I have preached with far more certainty of a spiritual harvest than the husbandman can have of a natural harvest when he casts the seed into the ground. God's Word will not return to Him void. This He has declared; this we must believe. Doubting it, we are shorn of our power; we become dwarfs when we ought to be giants. Has not God declared that seed time and harvest shall not fail? And they do not. Shall He be more mindful of the harvests of the earth than of the ingathering of souls? Rather, in the spiritual vineyard we ought to expect a continuous harvest. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that the ploughman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed." Here is a continuous harvest; here the fruits of one season are

not gathered before the sowing for the next season begins. There ought never to be, in the technical sense, a revival in a church, because there ought never to be anything else. Let us not now talk of waiting four months for harvest. Why put off earnest efforts until the week of prayer? Lift up your eyes now and behold the fields white already with harvest. The reaper shall certainly come. Sunday-school teachers, continue your work in this spirit. Parents, preachers, workers in all departments of Christian effort, you do not toil alone. God's eye is upon you. You shall certainly reap if you faint not. Go forward. Tearfully sow the seed; joyfully await the harvest.

A second feature of the second picture is that the reaper comes with rejoicing. Of course he does. Why should he now be sad? Some of us remember the "Harvest-home" singing and rejoicing when the last sheaf was gathered in. Something like that is here implied. There is no joy like that which comes from successful work for Christ. All the joys of earth are nothing when compared with this. This endures; this allies us to angels and God. This awakens the purest and noblest instincts of the soul. In this joy we feel the throb of Christ's heart. The promise to Him is that "He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied." This joy is mingled even with the gloom of Gethsemane and Calvary. It was for the joy set before Him that He endured the cross and despised the shame. I pity the man who knows nothing of this rejoicing; I envy the man whose soul is constantly overflowing with its blessedness.

But, again, he comes bringing his sheaves with him. This gives additional joy. Behold the picture! He is returning with his sheaves. These he cannot carry.

Oxen and the wain are introduced. The wagon groans under the burden ; the reaper joyously walks on before. He is abundantly rewarded for his toil ; his soul overflows with joy. This assurance would cheer the hearts of the exiles who were still journeying home ; it would stimulate those who had returned. It encourages all who are laboring for their own salvation and that of others. You labor not in vain. God shall give the increase. We ought to be willing to labor even if we do not reap. God may sometimes require this of us. One sows, another reaps. Christ taught this lesson. But, thank God, He often permits us both to sow and reap. Never to reap requires marvellous faith if the sower be earnest ; if he be indifferent he will not long for sheaves. But we may expect them. As God lives we shall not toil in vain. Are you watching for the harvest ? Are you willing to stand before Christ without sheaves ? God forbid that this should be the experience of any of you ! There is a great harvest-day coming. The field shall be the world ; angels shall be the reapers. Oh, that great and terrible day ! Oh, that joyous and blessed day ! When that day dawns " the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads ; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

But we are all sowers and reapers. The law of spiritual agriculture is as sure as the law of gravitation. You may not expect to sow thistles and reap wheat ; you cannot sow the seeds of vice and reap the fruits of virtue. You cannot cheat God. If you sow the flesh you must reap corruption ; if you sow the wind you must reap the whirlwind ; if you sow to the world, the flesh and the devil, as the eternal God lives, you shall reap an eternal hell. Judging by your sowing to-day,

I ask you in God's name, "What shall the harvest be?" Whatsoever a man soweth, that, precisely that, shall he reap. Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die? Sow to-day the seeds of a tearful repentance and you shall reap the fruits of a joyful forgiveness. Patience, courage, oh sowers of the good seed, soon we shall stand before the Lord of the harvest joyfully saying, "Here are we and the sheaves thou hast given us."

IX.

VICTORIOUS YOUNG MEN.

"I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the Word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one."—1 JOHN 2 : 14.

A WELL-ORGANIZED and truly prosperous church of Christ will embrace in its members all classes and conditions of society. Such a church will have the rich to give it social position and financial strength, and the poor to meet the requirement of Him who hath said, "For ye have the poor always with you."

Such a church will have the young to give it freshness and enthusiasm, and the aged to give it the gravity and wisdom born of large and varied experience. It will also have those in middle life, with chastened enthusiasm and ripening wisdom—strong to fight the battles and calm to rejoice in the triumphs of the Christian life. Each class acts and reacts healthfully and helpfully on each other class. A beautiful old age becomes more beautiful when contrasted with the opening life of youth; and the stalwart strength of middle life assumes grander proportions when placed between these extremes. A religious teacher will be influential, other things being equal, in proportion as he is able to sympathize with all these classes—with the hopefulness of youth, the conscious strength of middle life, and the ripe experience of age. Such a man was the Apostle John. He was one of those charming old men, the freshness and vigor

of whose hearts remain, although their heads are white and their limbs are feeble. Here he addresses the little children—those young alike in years and in Christian faith; the old men—those who had long and faithfully borne the burden and heat of the day, some of whom may have had a personal acquaintance with the Lord Jesus; and the young men—those in the prime and bloom of early manhood. He could appeal to the latter because they were strong. Little children had not reached the age when they could be appealed to on that basis; old men had passed that age. He calls on those who possessed energy of body and mind to stand up valiantly for the truth.

What was right for John to do in his day is both the duty and privilege of every pastor to do in our day. Christ gives young men the opportunity and glory of giving the dew of their youth and the strength of their manhood to His blessed service.

John mentions three characteristics of these young men. Our purpose is simply to give an exposition and to make an application of these characteristics.

FIRST CHARACTERISTIC.

The first characteristic is suggested by the words, "Ye are strong." There is inspiration in the very words. Youth is the synonym of strength. We may well believe that the idea of *physical* strength enters into John's conception of strong young men. There is a truth, although often unduly pressed, in what is called "muscular Christianity." You have all seen young men whose admirable physical development elicited admiration. The storms which snap the old and feeble trees of the forest, only root more firmly the vigorous oak and the supple sapling. So the storms of life, which dampen

the ardor of the very young and chill the blood of the old, only quicken the life and awaken the enthusiasm of young men—giving to the step a firmer tread and to the cheek a fresher glow. Such men seem to present no vulnerable point to the approach of disease.

The Gospel sanctifies and glorifies the body. It becomes under the Gospel's influence the temple of the Holy Ghost. It is a false and wicked conception of religion which degrades the body. Religion, when its work is complete, contemplates the resurrection of the body as well as the redemption of the soul. Physical health is not only a privilege but a duty. Sickness is often a reflection on a young man's good sense, if not on his moral character. He who sins against his body sins against his God. The Bible properly translated never speaks of the body as vile. Ever since Christ tabernacled in human flesh, the body has been dignified and glorified. Let us honor it as belonging to Christ, and a part of His wonderful workmanship. All true Christians will be more successful in their "high calling" if there is a good body around a good soul. And obedience to Christ tends directly to make sound bodies. It nips vice in the bud, supplants impure thoughts and unholy desires, substituting the highest aims and the best motives as the ruling principle of life. So that to write Christ upon the soul is often to write health, vigor, and beauty on the body. But all men cannot be thus strong. Many receive as their only heritage a poor, feeble body. Some of the greatest souls that have ever labored and prayed dwelt in weak, frail tenements. It is amazing what an amount of work such a soul will get out of such a body. As preachers, as artists, authors, and poets, great souls and weak bodies have been wedded until they were divorced by death. And to-day men

and women, languishing on beds of pain, are in their resignation, their patience, their heroism, worthy to be called in the highest sense strong—stronger, perhaps, than those who hold aloft the banner and sing aloud the triumphs of their Lord and Saviour.

We may be sure that *intellectual* culture, in some degree, at least, is an element in young men who are strong. Ignorance is a crime. There is no excuse for it, with the system of public instruction open to rich and poor alike in our country. It ought to be known that, in a true sense, knowledge, not ignorance, is the mother of devotion. The infinitely great on the one hand, and the infinitely small on the other, invite us to their study, and charm us by their mystery. Christianity welcomes investigations. Her spirit builds our free schools and endows our colleges and seminaries. Christian young men ought to surpass all others in the extent and character of their attainments. They have Christ for their Teacher, and the noblest men and purest women the world has ever known for their fellow-pupils. Culture has ever adorned Christianity with its beauty; and Christianity, in turn, has crowned culture with its unfading glories. Learning has ever found its noblest employment in casting its treasures, like the wise men from the East, at the feet of Jesus. Christ must be placed in the very centre of the intellectual life, if its highest possibilities are to be realized. All intellectual activity must go out from Him as light rays out from the sun. When He is so enthroned truths will adjust themselves to one another in their proper relations. The pure white light of intellect is impossible except it kindles its torch at the cross of Christ. The highest glory of Greek and Latin literature was a reflection from the divine splendor which rested on Hebrew altars. The

crystal streams of these literatures find their origin in the blessed truths of the divine revelation. The men who most triumphantly walk the dizzy heights of intellectual greatness are those who most humbly walk with God. The most loyal disciple in Christ's school, other things being equal, should be the most successful disciple in all other schools. Christ is the truth. In its vast realm He is King. All truth worships at His pierced feet. This thought gives dignity to intellectual pursuits. All angles and triangles, sines and cosines, thus become revelations of the thoughts of God. Geometry becomes voiceful with eternal truths, and astronomy declares the glory of God and the firmament showeth His handiwork. All history is but an unfolding of His divine plan and eternal purpose. The undevout student is unscientific. How can he master the great truths of science or history if he be disloyal to the King of truth? To know them aright he must first know Him aright. As well might a man write a treatise on astronomy and leave out the sun, as attempt to write a history of this world and leave out Jesus Christ, the Sun of Righteousness. All science, all history, all true intellectual effort receives from Him its inspiration and lays at His feet its noblest achievements.

Strength of body and vigor of mind, however, do not exhaust the Apostle John's idea of strong young men. The noble Paul gives us his conception of strength when he says, "Finally, brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." Young men, I beseech you, do not attempt to stand alone. Thousands, strong as you, have fallen in this terrible fight. Hundreds are yearly sacrificed as an awful holocaust to Satan. Will you swell the num-

ber? Will you bring sadness into the distant homes where in innocence you were cradled?—into the hearts of parents whose gray hairs you may bring down with sorrow to the grave? Will you wound afresh the Son of God? Attempt not this fight alone. Satan is not a match for Christ; but he is more than a match for you. You must be girded by the strength of God and clothed in the righteousness of Christ. Stand with God. Stand alone with Him if need be. One young man with Christ by His side is a tremendous majority. Then you will be able, "having done all, to stand."

SECOND CHARACTERISTIC.

The second characteristic of these young men is thus stated: "The Word of God abideth in you." They had been exposed to "youthful lusts;" they had resisted the allurements of vice, and triumphed over the powers of darkness. They had been tested as to their adherence to the principles of religion and the truth of God; and John bears the testimony that the Word of God was abiding in them.

The presence of this Word in their hearts, and their devotion to it in their lives, were a proof of their strength. The Word of God was the shield with which they had warded off the fiery darts of the enemy. The lesson is peculiarly valuable. Many young men are ambitious to be considered great readers; and they too often neglect the Bible. It is impossible to read all the books published by the prolific press of the day. It is as undesirable as it is impossible. As well might you submit to having every man you might meet on Broadway to-morrow morning take you by the buttonhole, as have every book published arrest your attention. There are, however, certain classics that every well-informed

man should read. Works of history, science, art, and some works of fiction there are which he should read, but not to the neglect of the Word of God. In it are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. When Sir Walter Scott lay dying he asked his son-in-law, Mr. Lockhart, to read for him. "What book?" said Mr. Lockhart. "What book?" said Sir Walter. "There is but one book—the Bible—read that." He who had read so widely, and had contributed so many immortal pages to literature, gives this testimony to the value of the Bible. Mr. Dickens was in the habit of writing a letter to each of his sons as he left the parental roof. In one he urged his son, whatever other books he neglected, to read the Bible, as it contained the purest morality and the best rules of life known to the world. When Milton would become "a poet, soaring in the high reason of his fancies, with his garland and singing robes about him," he must go to the Bible for his highest theme. The music of "Siloa's brook that flowed fast by the oracle of God," gives its charm to his lofty verse. When Raphael would perpetuate his name to unborn generations he must ascend "the holy mount," stand in the supernal glory, and gaze on the transfigured Christ. As the "Transfiguration" was his greatest, so it was his last work. He died in early manhood, with the "Transfiguration" on his heart and brain. That picture was carried with him to his grave at his burial. When Handel was discouraged by attempting to give opera in a foreign language, he accepted an invitation from several notables of Ireland to visit Dublin. From a friend he received a text from the Bible on which he composed his immortal work, known at the first as the "Sacred Oratorio," known now as the "Messiah." Both in Dublin and in London this work gave him immediate

fame; it has since crowned him throughout the world with unfading glory. The debt which music, painting, sculpture and literature owe to the Bible cannot be fully estimated. It is said that the Red Cross Knight in Spenser's "Faerie Queene" is but Paul's armed Christian in the sixth chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians; that Pope's "Messiah" is but a paraphrase of prophetic and seraphic passages in Isaiah; that the noblest strains in Cowper's "Task" draw their inspiration and part of their imagery from the same rapt prophet; that the "Thanatopsis" of Bryant is but the expansion of a passage in Job; that Wordsworth's "Ode on Immortality" could never have been written but for Paul's fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians and the eighth chapter of Romans; that Shakespeare's conception of woman, of a Desdemona, of an Ophelia, would have been impossible had not his mind been permeated by a Bible, a Christian ideal. This suggestive thought could be much expanded; these instructive illustrations might be greatly multiplied. The Bible gave all these men—working in different departments of genius—their inspiration. Shall we be so inconsistent as to rejoice in the streams while we despise the fountain whence they flowed?

In a still higher sphere the indwelling of God's Word is an absolute necessity. By its presence and power Christ triumphed in the wilderness. Satan said: "Command that these stones be made bread." "Exert Thy power and prove Thy Sonship." How does Christ reply? Will He by an act of divine power blast the tempter? Had He done so His example would be lost to us. He answers, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone." Satan takes his cue for the next temptation from this reply. He sees that Jesus has implicit faith in God. He will test that faith. "Cast Thyself

down from this pinnacle. Show to all the people what faith you have in God." Our Lord again replies: "It is written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." It is right to trust God; it is wicked to tempt God. Defeated twice, the tempter tries again: "Bow down and worship me." Christ's answer comes, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." Christ uses but one weapon—"the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God." He uses no weapon which we may not use; He wins no victory which we may not win. Our temptations are in their essential elements similar to His; our triumphs may be like His. The Word of God is not, however, a magical charm, by pronouncing which we may be safe. It must have the consent of our will and be a part of ourselves. We must have the supple wrist to use this sword. We must have the appropriate passage ready for immediate service. Young men, if you would strike down your spiritual enemies, learn to use this defensive weapon. Let the Word of God abide in you richly.

THIRD CHARACTERISTIC.

The third characteristic of these young men is that they had "overcome the wicked one." Was there ever a prouder eulogy pronounced on any heroes? "Ye have overcome the wicked one." Let that commendation ring through the world forever. Let the zephyrs whisper it, let the hurricanes thunder it. Hear it, young men, struggling with inward weakness and outward trials. Hear it, you who are tasting sin and are charmed by it. Hear it, you who are sceptical, who sneer at virtue as if it were impossible, and who laugh at vice as if it were universal. Once, thanks be to God, there was a body of young men who had "overcome the wicked

one" within and without them. Put alongside of this the conquests of Alexander, compare with it the victories of Cæsar, read in its light the triumphs of Napoleon. Alexander conquered nations; he could not conquer the passions of his own heart; he died the victim of his lust. Cæsar and Napoleon were vanquished while they were victors. "Ye have overcome the wicked one." Amazing fact! Satan robbed heaven of angels; he entered paradise, and overthrew a sinless pair; he brought sin into our fair world, filling it with tears, mourners, graves, and death. And yet here are young men who have overcome him—men of like passions with you and me—men who fought as we may fight, and conquered as we may conquer. This is a glorious statement. Thank God that it was ever written. I fling it out to all who are faint-hearted. I would write it on the banners of every church, and on the heart of every disciple in the world. Does the battle grow fierce? Are the darts of the enemy numerous and fiery? Are you faint and ready to give up? Above the din of conflict come the words of Christ, "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." And from another part of the field come the words of John, "Ye have overcome the wicked one." Oh, heart-inspiring words! Young men, you, too, may "come off more than conquerors." Thanks be to God for His matchless grace; sinful men may stand where sinless angels fell!

THE APOSTLE'S SOLICITUDE.

John was solicitous regarding the young men. In this anxiety he acted wisely. In comparative youth many have achieved greatness. If men do not show signs of power before they are thirty the chances are that they never will; there are illustrious exceptions, we

know, but they simply prove the rule. At eighteen Alexander the Great won distinction in battle, and at twenty he ruled the world ; when but thirty-three Jefferson was chosen to draught the Declaration of Independence ; when but twenty-seven Calvin wrote his immortal "Institutes," which have so largely shaped the theological thinking of the world ; at twenty-seven Napoleon "executed that grand campaign in Italy which stamped him the foremost captain" of the world, and which hurled the stricken Austrians back to their endangered capital ; when scarcely out of his teens Spurgeon was filling the world with his fame ; while still young, John the Baptist and the apostles of Jesus achieved glorious results for God and man. And it was as a young man that Christ lived and labored for a lost world ; it was the life-blood of a young man which He poured out on the cross for the world's salvation. In the vigor, freshness, and bloom of young manhood, He lived, died, and rose again. Had He lived to be old and feeble the effect, to human view, would be disastrous. And as a young man, the God-man, He sits on His mediatorial throne to plead for young men who will accept His proffered love. We know, too, that from our young men must come the workers in all departments of toil. From among them are to come our merchants, who are to honor or disgrace the name American at home and abroad ; from them must come those who as physicians are to stand by us and those we love in sickness and death. From them are to come those who are to vindicate the right or wink at wrong in our courts of law. From them are to come those who stand between God and men as preachers of the Word. Shall our ministers be men of God ? Shall our doctors be lovers of Christ ? These are questions of the greatest moment. Young men must be leaders in

all progressive movements of reform. The world is advancing. We ought to be more and better than our fathers were. We ought to start where they stopped. In some respects progress in religion is impossible. We can have no new gospel. What is new is not true in this regard, and what is true is not new. But there may be progress in the discovery and application of these truths. In intellectual work and in business we always adapt our methods to our circumstances. Precisely so should it be in religion. Progress in religious work is just the adapting of our methods to our circumstances. It is just common sense, sanctified by the Spirit of God. From the very nature of the case, young men must lead in making these adaptations. And no church can be in the largest sense successful which has not in it a body of active, consecrated young men. Do not suppose that I disparage one class to exalt another. Each has its place and work. The cause of Christ needs young men for action and old men for counsel. Neither ought to come in conflict with the other. Thank God for both. While my heart is stirred with tenderness and sympathy as young men pray, the prayers of these veterans lift me up to the very throne of God. Many of you, old men, bear in your bodies the scars of the Christian conflict. We bless God for the enthusiasm of youth, and not less for the wisdom and experience of age.

Dear young people, let me urge you to come as lost and helpless sinners to the cross of Christ. Here is the true starting-point of noble lives. It is sad to see young men and women assuming the duties and responsibilities of life, of husbands and wives and parents without God and without hope. It makes the heart weep to see them live as if there were no God; to sit at tables on which God's blessing has not been asked; to sleep and wake,

and never lift the heart to God in gratitude or want. If there is a sight that might make angels weep, it is a prayerless mother. Young people, to-day thousands the world over are praying for you. Pray for yourselves. Come now to Christ. Accept the offers of His love. Stand with me beneath the shadow of that cross, which is at once the symbol of God's great love and man's great sin. See the flowing blood, hear the dying cry. Your debt is paid. Your soul may be saved. Believe and live. Let your weakness lay hold of the strength of the Almighty Christ. Then shall you be "strong;" then shall He who is the "Word of God" abide in you; then shall you "overcome the wicked one." And then, at the last, in the flush of triumph and the glory of the resurrection morning, we shall together sing, with deep humility and unspeakable joy, "Thanks be unto God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

X.

A COMPREHENSIVE PRAYER.

"Unite my heart to fear Thy name."—Psa. 86 : 11.

This is a short but comprehensive prayer. Uttered a long time ago, it is appropriate still. Beautiful in thought, it is also poetic in form. Like a strain of sweet music it has lingered for years in my mind. It has often moulded my thinking and controlled my living.

Let us look, in the first place, at the meaning of this prayer, "Unite my heart to fear Thy name." Careless readers may fail to catch its significance. There is here a recognition of the truth that men ought to love God with all the heart, mind, and strength ; and also a recognition of the sad fact that men do not so love God. The idea is that our hearts are distracted, that our affections are set upon various objects ; and the prayer is that they may all be gathered in, and united in loving and fearing God. The Apostle James tells us that "a double-minded man is unstable in all his ways." By double-minded he means, as the Greek shows, a man who has two souls, two wills, two hearts—one for God and one for the world. In the twelfth Psalm, second verse, we have the language "with a double heart do they speak." The literal rendering of the Hebrew is "with a heart and a heart," as in another place we have "a stone and a stone," meaning divers weights ; one to buy with and another to sell with. So this "heart and a heart" produce inconsistency and hypocrisy. With one heart, the

Psalmist teaches us, the flatterer gives expression to the words he uses of his neighbor; with the other he carefully and wickedly conceals his true designs. Such a man is unworthy of our confidence and love. In First Chronicles we read of "fifty thousand men who could keep rank; they were not of double heart." The last phrase literally rendered is, "Who were not of a heart and a heart." They had but one purpose—the triumph of their own arms and the honor of their king. The man with "a heart and a heart" will be found striving to serve God and mammon. Such service is impossible. The heart was made by God and for Him. Although an instrument of many strings, all are intended to blend in a song of praise to the great Creator. As an æolian harp gives forth melody when the wind passes through it, so the heart should breathe out its responses of love and obedience when the breath of God comes to it in entreaty or command. But the sad truth must be acknowledged —the heart is out of tune. An unskilful or malicious player has dared to interfere with God's instrument. Some of its cords are drawn too tightly; some are slackened unduly; some are broken entirely. Instead of harmony we have discord; instead of praise we have the wild notes of revelry. Eden has given place to Babel; and, if no counteracting law comes in to check the downward tendencies of the natural heart, Babel will become hell.

Now, if by the strings of this instrument we understand the faculties of the soul, the idea of the text will appear plain. By these faculties we mean memory, reason, taste, imagination, conscience, and others. Let any unconverted man examine these faculties, and he will at once understand the meaning and necessity of the words, "Unite my heart to fear Thy name." How is it

with memory? Do you prefer to remember those truths which would lead you to love and obey God? or do you not remember the vile oath, the impure thought, and the devilish suggestion longer than the sermon, the hymn, or the prayer? Question your reason. What is its testimony? It too often perverts the truth—making the worse appear the better reason. So of taste, in literature, art, and religion. Imagination is oftener the servant of evil than of good. The bad is selected—the good is discarded. Amid these perverted faculties conscience stands like a moral policeman. It is true that some men have learned the secret of city rogues; they either drug or fee this officer. Then their hearts may be for a time united; but it is a union with death. There may for a little time be peace; but it is the peace of the grave. There may be a compact; but it is a league with hell. Ordinarily, however, conscience remains comparatively free from the alliances of the devil.

Armed with the power of truth, and backed by the might of God, conscience lifts its warning voice and summons all the other faculties to lay down their weapons, cease their strife, and march in line to the throne of the King, seeking His gracious pardon. There is a tremendous "oughtness" in the place assigned by our very moral constitution to conscience. To change the figure. The unrenewed heart is a house divided against itself; Christ said such a house could not stand. Conscience is the only pillar left standing, and it shows signs of weakness. Now, this conflict must cease. The entire man belongs to Jesus. Rebellion on our part does not abrogate His claims. Christ should sit on the throne of the heart. Conscience thunders YES. Pride, passion, and lust say NO. Such, to a greater or less degree, is the conflict in the heart of every unconverted man. Do you

feel that my words are true? Is the picture a genuine one? Do you acknowledge that you are well-nigh helpless in this warfare? Then lift now to Christ this prayer, "Unite my heart;" take this long-divided heart, and make it Thine; gather up my scattered affections, and set them on Christ and heavenly things—"Unite my heart to fear Thy name." Make this your prayer, and then by a joyous experience shall you know the meaning of this text.

Secondly, let me speak of the reasons for offering this prayer. I mention three, and I begin with the lowest; a proper regard for our own happiness would lead us to offer it. You may charge me with assigning an unworthy motive for the performance of a Christian duty. You may say that duty ought to be performed because it is duty, because it is right in and of itself. True. This, nevertheless, is a proper motive. God has given each of us the instinct of self-love, and the desire to seek our own happiness. He has thus through our organization revealed His will in this respect; and He has added to that revelation by all the truths of His Word. He desires us to be happy. He takes no pleasure in our sufferings either here or hereafter. It is true that the desire for happiness is not in itself a high motive. Holiness is better than happiness, holiness will always produce happiness. But God takes us where He finds us. He applies the motive which promises the desired result; and then He lifts us to a higher plane.

Now no man can be happy while his desires and affections are at war with one another. While two antagonistic powers within a man are at the same time claiming authority over him, he must be essentially miserable. While Bunyan remained in the City of Destruction, after he became aware that it was such a city, he was

miserable indeed. Actual imprisonment of the body in Bedford Jail were better far than this awful distraction and enslavement of the mind and soul. When God burned into the heart of Carey a sense of his duty in preaching the Gospel to the heathen, it became impossible for him to be happy until he did that duty. Good, pious conservatism might say to him, as it has often said since to the zeal and enthusiasm born of God in the hearts of young men: "Young man, sit down; if the Lord wants to convert the heathen He will do it without your help." But Carey's desire was as fire in his bones. He must go; with such feelings a desire for his own peace and happiness, even if there were no higher motive, would compel him to go. It is always true that in the end the path of duty, however rough it may seem, is the path of joy.

There is a young man preaching the Gospel to-day who once felt that he never could perform that duty. On bended knee he promised the Lord that he would give of earthly means to send another in his place. His heart was not united. Conscience, wrought upon by the Spirit of God, said, Go. Desire, ambition, the hopes and dreams of all his previous life said, No. His agony was great; it became unendurable. It brought him to his knees in deep anguish. He must yield or bid adieu to joy, peace, heaven. He did yield, and he has found that joy in Christ is inseparable from obedience to Christ. Could I describe fully the feelings of some of you, I should have a too true illustration of the statement that a desire for your own peace should lead you to offer this prayer. There are those who have long felt that they ought to be Christians. Sometimes they are almost decided to yield; at other times they almost determine never to come to the house of God, never to talk on re-

ligion ; in short, to give up the whole subject. They are supremely miserable—dissatisfied with the world, but not reconciled to God through Christ. Now, let me appeal for once to your self-love. It is a low motive, I know. But let even that be the means which God shall use to lead you to give yourselves wholly to Him. Give up the foolish, the wicked contest. Ground your arms. Touch the outstretched sceptre of mercy. Acquaint yourselves now with God and be forever at peace.

I speak now of a second reason for offering this prayer —the desire to be not only happy yourselves, but to make others so—the desire to be useful in Christ's service. It is a trite remark among business and professional men, that to be eminently successful in any pursuit a man's heart must be in it. A half-hearted man is a failure anywhere and everywhere. You would not give much for a young man in your employ who had no interest in your prosperity, and no enthusiasm in his profession. If you expected him ever to accomplish anything for himself and ever to be worth anything to you, you would say to him : " Young man, unite your heart in my work." It has recently been discovered that the clerks in one of the stock exchanges in London were carrying on among themselves, and for their own interests, separate transactions. They had their own books, officers, and times and places of meeting. It is said that they are all to be discharged. They were half-hearted in the service of their employer. They were drawn hither by self-interest, and thither by the interest of their employers. Such clerks business men do not want in their service. Neither will God in His service share the heart with man or devil. A bank president was congratulated on his success. He replied that his secret was in taking his bank to bed with him. We all understand

his meaning. His whole heart was in his work. He was in dead earnest. Such a man, in business or religion, will always make things come to pass. We have referred to David's army—the fifty thousand who were not of a "heart and a heart." This is a proud eulogy. They were animated by one overmastering purpose. Each heart was single; the army had but one aim. They had not one heart for the battle, and another for their homes. They had no personal ends to serve. They believed in God; they rejoiced in David; they were determined to cleave for him a way to the throne. This unity of heart, this oneness of purpose, makes fifty thousand men more than five hundred thousand who hesitate and waver.

Let love of liberty unite the hearts of Englishmen. Put the invincible Cromwell at their head, and the ends of the earth shall shake under their mighty tread. Let love of glory inflame the minds and unite the hearts of France, and Napoleon will illumine the darkness of the night with the fires of battle, and cloud the sun at noonday with the smoke of conflict. He will sweep over Europe like a fiend of destruction from the pit. His armies were but a great engine of desolation. Every heart beat in his. There was but one soul in all. I might stir your enthusiasm by enumerating victories nearer home, and naming men under whose inspiration some of you of the North and some of you of the South, rushed into the jaws of death, and won victories on the gory field. In grander fields, too, oneness of aim and singleness of purpose have triumphed. Think of Paul. What is the secret of his life on the human side? "This one thing I do." He was a man of one idea—an idea so broad that it took in all the other noble ideas. Marvellous man! His shadow is projected everywhere in the Roman Empire. He dwarfs the missionaries of

our day. His gigantic mind, his loving heart, and his tireless body bowed down at the feet of Jesus, and rose one with himself and one with Christ. Why need I multiply examples? Range over all history, in politics, literature, science, art, and religion, and the secret of success in all is that men put their whole being, heart, and brains into their work, and under God they succeeded. A church with fifty persons in it, loyal to God and true to the souls of men, working with one heart and soul, and led on by a noble and godly pastor, will do more for God and men than five hundred average church-members. With such a force behind him, and God above him, a pastor might soon take this great city for Christ. Oh, for the wisdom of the heroic Gideon! Let the war-cry again go out as at the battle of Jezreel, by the "Spring of Trembling"—"Whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early from Mount Gilead." What if there should return of the people "twenty and two thousand?" Better ten thousand with one heart, than thirty-two thousand "with a heart and a heart." The cowards are now gone. But "the people are yet too many." Another test must be applied. The self-indulgent as well as the cowardly must be removed. Those who rushed headlong to quench their thirst are therefore rejected. But those who exercised self-restraint, marching to battle while they lapped the water, were selected. Poor Gideon, all are gone but three hundred! Happy Gideon! For the Lord said: "By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand; and let all the other people go every man unto his place." Awake ye sleepers, the "cake of barley bread" will roll into the camp and hurl the royal tent to the earth. He divides his men; he surrounds the camp; the cry, "The

sword of the Lord and of Gideon" rends the midnight air. The blowing of the horns, the crashing of the pitchers, and the blazing of the torches break upon the stillness of the night. Midianite drew his sword against Midianite. Headlong they rushed down the descent to the Jordan. Terrible was the slaughter. Glorious was the victory. And over the Jordan went Gideon and his brave three hundred, "faint, yet pursuing." Three hundred men with united hearts were better than thirty-two thousand "with a heart and a heart." The Church needs the lesson. It needs to be weeded to-day. Her half-hearted, lukewarm disciples are dead weights in her progress. They are vampires that suck her life-blood while they lull her to sleep with their fanning wing. Perhaps we need again the fagot and the flame; the stake and the rack. Well is it when those who are of "a heart and a heart" go back to their homes that the brave may win for truth and God.

These principles apply to denominational life. Men who are half-hearted in holding the distinctive truth of their denomination are hindrances to its progress. The Episcopal denomination is stronger because of the absence of the party that went out with Bishop Cummings, than they could possibly be with their presence. As soon as that party was not of them just so soon should they go out from them. There is a law of denominational gravitation, which like that of natural gravitation must be obeyed, or the most injurious consequences will follow. Honesty, manliness, godliness requires that when we cannot harmonize with a denomination we should leave it. The events of the last few weeks in our own denomination show the importance of this law of gravitation. "And being let go, they went to their own company." Those who are true will remain.

They will march on to victory. Perhaps sometimes "faint," but always "pursuing," as faithful disciples of a greater than Gideon, they will go on "conquering and to conquer."

As Christians in your denominational and individual life, you will be happy in yourselves, and useful to others, in proportion as you daily offer this prayer, "Unite my heart to fear Thy name." Do not attempt to serve God and at the same time love yourselves supremely. Do not attempt to cherish the Christian's hope, while you refuse to render the Christian's obedience. Do not strive to be a Christian and refuse publicly to confess Christ in His appointed ordinance of baptism. Such conduct brings leanness into your souls and dishonor on your Saviour. Be true to yourselves and your God, and you will be both happy and useful. Offering this prayer in all sincerity you will soon hear the "Peace be with you," of Christ's benediction, and the "Go preach My Gospel," of Christ's commission.

The last reason for offering this prayer is, that the honor and command of God demand that we give Him a united heart. These three reasons, you will perceive, are related. The last includes the others; for if we give Christ our united heart, and devote to Him our lives, we shall be useful to others, and, being useful to others, we shall be happy in ourselves. God made us to love Him alone with the whole heart. The command so to love Him is a summary of all His commands. The soil of the heart was made to bear wheat only; it was the hand of an enemy that sowed tares. The heart was made always to pant after God, and to find its joy and peace only when reposing on His bosom. In order that we may have joy in ourselves, be useful to others, and be loyal to Christ, we must have a united heart in Christian service. Every

thought, motion, and desire should be in subjection to the will of Christ. Such a state of feeling is the pledge and foretaste of heaven. Every storm of passion is hushed, and the whole current of our feeling flows toward God. We speak of heaven as a place of music, because music is our highest conception of harmony. In proportion as this divine harmony is in the soul now, in that proportion is heaven in the soul even now. Christ is the great Reconciler between the faculties of the soul and between the soul and God. I lift before you the cross of Christ. Will you now "look and live?" Will you now accept Christ as your only hope? "Behold the Lamb of God," and looking to Him find life. So lovely and loving is Jesus, that even those of us who gave Him our hearts in the morning of life and in the dew of youth can say in the simple, tender, and emotive utterance of Augustine: "Too late I love Thee, O Thou Beauty of ancient days, yet ever new; too late I love Thee!" With a greater than Augustine we can pray, "Unite my heart to fear Thy name," and with a greater than David, "Not my will but Thine be done."

XI.

OUR LORD'S MYSTERIOUS SORROW.

"My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death."—Matt. 26 : 38.

Our object this morning is to discuss some of the elements of our Lord's mysterious sorrow in the garden. The subject is one of deep solemnity and great tenderness. Not at all times, nor in all frames of mind and heart, is it fitting to discuss such a subject as this. As Moses removed his shoes when he approached the holy ground of the burning bush, so should we strive to banish all unholy thoughts when we walk beneath the olive trees of Gethsemane and gaze on the cross of Calvary. The history of the race is one of sin and sorrow ; it is also one of grace and glory. Three wonderful gardens are there in that history—Eden, Gethsemane, Paradise. Lost in Eden, we were redeemed in Gethsemane, and those who are thus redeemed shall be glorified in Paradise. The first is a history of sin and sorrow on our part ; the second is a history of sorrow without sin on Christ's part ; the last will be a scene of neither sin nor sorrow. We look with shame to Eden, with sorrow to Gethsemane, and with humble, holy joy to Paradise. But Gethsemane we must visit before we can reach Paradise. To that scene of sorrow let us go this morning.

We go out of the eastern gate of the city of Jerusalem, down a steep and abrupt hill, across the bed, over which, at certain seasons of the year, passes the dark-flowing Kedron, and now on our right lies the Garden

of Gethsemane. It is a small plot of ground, nearly square, and now surrounded with a fence of rough stone surmounted with stucco. Within the enclosure are eight venerable olive trees. Beneath the shade of perhaps similar trees Christ bowed in His agony. It is night in Jerusalem. The lights are out. The streets are silent. The pilgrims are in their tents on the hill-side asleep. The moon at this Passover season shines brightly. Christ and eleven of His disciples pass over the track we have described and enter the garden. Eight disciples are left near the entrance; three—the elect within the elect, the three who were admitted to witness the miracle of raising the ruler's daughter, the three who had been with Him "in the holy mount," and having seen the glory of the transfiguration were prepared for the humiliation of the garden—He takes with Him to a little distance within the shade of the garden. And now the wave of His mysterious sorrow rolls over Him. Even from these He withdraws Himself a little space. He prays; He returns; He departs to pray again; He returns; He departs; He kneels; He falls prostrate; He agonizes; great drops as it were blood fall upon the ground. He triumphs. The contest is over; the conquest is won. He returns in calmness to His sleeping disciples and awaits in perfect peace the approach of His betrayer. This great sorrow is something to us "who pass by." We shall "Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto His sorrow, wherewith the Lord afflicted Him in the day of His fierce anger."

This is a mysterious sorrow. Some of its elements, however, we can understand. Let us reverently examine these, and see whether they will explain its intensity and bitterness. If not, another cause will be suggested. The ingratitude of those for whom He lived

and died was an element in that sorrow. Christ was keenly alive to every expression of ingratitude. There are many hints given of this fact. He healed ten lepers. Nine went their way ; one returned to express joy and gratitude. Christ asks sadly after the nine selfish and ungrateful ones. He said mournfully that He came unto His own, but they received Him not. His heart revealed its deep loneliness when He compared Himself with the foxes who had holes, and the birds who had nests, while He had not where to lay His head. Earth, cursed by sin, had no resting-place for its Maker and Lord. When it would exalt Him it did so by a cross ; when it would crown Him it did so with thorns. How a child's ingratitude breaks a parent's heart ! How the ingratitude of the poor dries up the fountains of love in the hearts of the benevolent rich ! Christ was subject to a similar law. His nation's ingratitude and hate were a heavy sorrow. His own family even did not believe in Him. The people who shouted "Hosanna" one day, shouted "Crucify" the next. Is it not also true that the ingratitude of all rejecters, in every age, was present to His mind ? If so, then, friends, our hardness of heart, our unbelief, our disobedience, was an element in Christ's sorrow. You unconverted children of godly parents, hearers but not doers of the Word, you rolled a wave of sorrow over Christ's soul. Oh look to-day into that garden where Jesus groans and prays for you ! See His tear-stained face ! Hear His agonizing moan ! Then let your heart break and your stubborn will relent. Oh friends unreconciled to God, your ingratitude, your procrastination and disobedience are wicked and cruel ! Cease now, I pray you, this weak and wicked rebellion. I would win you to Christ now—now while we gaze on Him in the garden.

The treachery, denial, and desertion on the part of His friends made another element in that nameless sorrow. While, as we shall see before we close, this sorrow was, in some of its elements, far above human thought, in other elements it was intensely human. It was sad enough to Christ that of all that vast host that welcomed Him on Sunday there should not be one on Friday to utter a word in His behalf. It was sad enough that of all the thousands whom he had cured, fed, and blessed in so many ways, not one would stand by Him in Pilate's hall. There was but one who spoke a word in His defence, and that one did not belong to the chosen people—the wife of the heathen Pilate. But saddest of all, in the chosen twelve one was a betrayer, one a denier, and all were deserters. "They all forsook Him and fled." Oh, base ingratitude! Oh, shameful cowardice! But shall I speak harshly of them and not also justly of ourselves? Their minds were distracted with many doubts which now are cleared away. They groped in the dawn; we walk in the noon-day. Their sin was great; ours is greater. Many times since then has Christ been denied, deserted, betrayed, by His professed friends. In social life, in the marts of trade, in the halls of sinful amusement, Jesus has been despised and rejected. And all this He foresaw. That wicked act of yours last week was a pang in Christ's heart. That absence from the house of God; that neglect of family or secret prayer—oh, these were part of Christ's great sorrow on that terrible night! Shall we continue in sin? Can we, dare we, love and practice that which slew our Lord?

The sorrows to which His people would be exposed were an element in that grief. The joys and sorrows of His people Christ made His own. On this Thursday night He realized—perhaps even more than He did on

the previous Sunday, when He wept over Jerusalem—what the Jewish nation incurred by His rejection. He saw that Jerusalem, the city of song and story, would soon be destroyed. He saw that God's chosen people would soon be scattered over the earth. All the horrors of the awful siege of Jerusalem were present to His view. Roman horses were to bathe their fetlocks in Jewish blood. Parents in the pangs of hunger were to destroy their own children. They would have no king but Cæsar. God gave them their wish, and Cæsar crushed them to the earth. Scattered over the world, despised and hated of all men, the Jews were to see their land trodden by the foot of the heathen Roman and the infidel Turk. Their prayer was answered. The blood of Christ was upon them, not to save but to destroy. Now, to Jesus as a man, a patriot, and a Saviour, the blindness and madness of His people became a cause of intense and bitter grief. He saw, too, the sorrows which were to come on Christian believers. Those of His nation who accepted Him—as well as those who rejected Him, though in different ways—were to suffer sorrow. Of all the disciples with Him in the garden, John was the only one who was to die a natural death. James first was to seal his testimony with his life. Peter, like his Lord, was to be crucified. The disciples who afterward believed on His name were to suffer persecution. Stephen, from the fast-falling shower of stones, was to go up to Christ at the right hand of God. Paul was present to Christ's view—Paul "fighting with beasts at Ephesus," "shamefully entreated at Philippi," cruelly imprisoned and beheaded at Rome. Huss, Luther, Bunyan, thousands of whom the world was not worthy, suffering for their Lord—these were in Christ's thoughts—these added to Christ's grief.

There was also a shrinking from the painful and shameful death of the cross. Let us not hesitate to say so. Christ was truly a man. True manhood is not indifferent to danger and suffering. Coarse and brutal natures may assume a stoicism which refined and cultivated natures cannot manifest. Dr. Parker, in "Ecce Deus," finely illustrates this thought. "Suffering," he says, "is a question of nature. The educated man suffers more than the uneducated; the poet probably suffers more than the mathematician; the commanding officer suffers more in a defeat than the common soldier. The more life, the more suffering, the billows of sorrow being in proportion to the volume of our manhood. Now, Jesus Christ was not merely a man; He was man; and by the very compass of His manhood He suffered more than any mortal can endure. The storm may pass as fiercely over the shallow lake as over the Atlantic, but by its very volume the latter is more terribly shaken." Christ's physical organization even, was, doubtless, exquisitely sensitive. Then there were the moral issues involved. Perhaps it is true, as has been claimed, that Christ died of a literally broken heart. He certainly keenly felt the pain and disgrace of His ignominious death. To assume even for a time the character of a felon is to a holy soul painful in the extreme. Actors of high reputation find it opposed to their taste to represent a character famous only for vileness. Christ's shrinking was natural and proper. It is a mark of honor and glory befitting the God-man. I give due weight to all these considerations. But I affirm that they do not of themselves account for His deep and awful sorrow. He must have known—He foretold it many times—that He was to rise from the dead on the third day. The grave could not hold Him. His physical sufferings at the worst

would be short. The victory was near. It was to be a brief darkness followed by a never-ending brightness. Who can believe this was more than an element—and compared with other elements an unimportant one—in His sorrow? Martyrs in Christ's name and for His sake have gone joyfully to the stake. They have shouted amid fagots and flames. They have gone to the block singing songs of triumph. They have lain in prisons of dampness and darkness until the chains rusted into their flesh. Wives and mothers have torn themselves from husbands and children to die for Jesus. We have read of Leonidas and his brave three hundred who stopped the onward march of the Persians at Thermopylæ, giving their lives joyfully for their country. We know of England's lovely queen who sucked the poison from the wound of the king, her consort, though she knew that death would be the result of her heroism. Again and again have brave soldiers rushed in to take the death-blows intended for their commanders. The pages of history contain the names of many such. Much more has willingness to suffer for Christ been seen. What glorious names come to us as we speak! There are thousands who are suffering a daily martyrdom for His sake. There are women tied to drunken and godless husbands and sweetly living for Christ, dying a thousand deaths, while they live a single life. Upheld by the blessed hopes of the Gospel, they never utter a murmur. At this hour there are, believe it, friends, thousands who would gladly lay down their lives for the Master, rather than deny Him. Think you, then, that simple fear of physical death could have so burdened and crushed the Son of God—the Lord of life and glory? A thousand times No. There was that: there was far more than that.

Another consideration is that Satan was permitted at this time to tempt Christ with peculiar power. Satan tempted Jesus in the wilderness and was repulsed. He left Him "for a season." He now returned. It was the last—the death-struggle. It was the world's crisis. The old conflict is to be settled forever. It is the "hour and the power of darkness." In one garden truth was crushed and error triumphed. The first Adam was overthrown, shall the second Adam? If so the knell of humanity may be rung. On the result of the conflict in this garden depends the possibility of entering paradise. If Satan triumph now God is no more God. Hell appreciates the struggle. Its artillery is hurled against the bowed sufferer. What an hour! What a conflict! Here let our hearts break in sympathy with our broken-hearted Lord. Oh be not indifferent when for you Christ is meeting the temptations of Satan! Christ is warding off eternal death and hell. Behold, behold, Him in His great agony! Never was there sorrow like that of our Jesus. Never was there victory like that of our Jesus. Blessed be His name! He struck the sceptre from the hand, and the crown from the brow of Satan, and won a glorious and eternal victory for His saints. He led captivity captive and won gifts for men.

The true explanation of the mysterious sorrow in the garden and the awful agony on the cross—as seen in the cries to God uttered in both places—is that Christ, the God-man, the divine Substitute, was bearing in some way the iniquities of a lost world. This is a holy of holies. It seems almost irreverent to judge with a critic's coolness these awful experiences. But such is the teaching of Scripture, alike in the Old and New Testaments. "He was bruised for our iniquities." "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." "It pleased the

Lord to bruise Him." Oh, no, the cup could not pass from Him! He drained it to the very dregs. "He hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin." He was "made a curse for us." "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree." He consented to have our sins laid upon Him. He is treated as the transgressor. Oh matchless love! Oh transcendent and sovereign grace! Blessed doctrine of divine substitution! God has found a way to save the lost. Heaven is opened to the vilest. With Paul we can exclaim, "Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" Away with the shallow human philosophy which, by ignoring the real facts, attempts to rob this awful and blessed truth of its meaning. Tell us not that Christ died merely as a martyr. On that theory explain the facts if you can. A true philosophy must accept all the facts. Answer, Socinianism. Answer, modern philosophy. In this explanation of Christ's sorrow we believe scriptural prophecy, historical fact, and apostolic reasoning all beautifully agree. "Let God be true" though all human theories be false.

There is a practical application of these truths. First, we see the exceeding sinfulness of sin. How lost was man when nothing short of such a sacrifice could save him! Christ cried out in tears and agony when He stood before God in the sinner's place. How terrible must it be for a sinner, on his own behalf, to attempt to stand before God! Christ sank for a time under the weight of sins not His own. How shall we meet God with sins upon us which are our own? Second, we see here, as nowhere else, the love of God in Christ. Marvellous love! No mind can conceive, no heart can feel, no tongue declare its greatness. The world is full of evidences of God's love. It is whispered in the winds, it

flashes in the sunlight, but here is its grandest display. "God so loved the world." Third, the duty of immediate submission to Christ is manifest. It is folly in the extreme to refuse the great salvation, and dare the wrath of a holy and just God. Men and women, in God's name I admonish you to-day, come and give yourselves to this great Saviour.

Turn now from the cold ground beneath the olive's shade, where, on that Thursday night Jesus began to give the ransom for your soul. Look to that cross on which on Friday He completed the purchase price. See Him bowing His head in death. Hear His triumphant cry, "It is finished!" That cross is at once the world's hope and the world's condemnation. It is at once the proof of God's great love and man's great sin. I lift it before you. Stop, travellers to eternity, it is something to you that Jesus dies! Is there any sorrow like Christ's? But I ask no maudlin sympathy and sentimental pity for Jesus. It is not for Him but for you that I plead. Look from the garden of agony and the cross of shame to the throne of glory on which now He sits. Cast yourselves as helpless sinners at His feet, exclaiming, with adoring Thomas, "My Lord and my God," and then shall you be able joyously to say, "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

XII.

THE PROMISE OF THE COMFORTER.

And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever."—JOHN 14 : 16.

SOME of you are aware that the exposition of these last discourses of our Lord has occupied our attention on Sunday mornings during the entire summer. Continuing this series of sermons we have reached this morning the verse now read as the text. This verse opens for us the great and precious promises which abound in this part of our Lord's discourse. It was sad enough for the disciples that Jesus must leave them; it was sadder still that He must leave them by death. It was saddest of all that He must die the death of a slave and a felon. In order to comfort them Christ gave them this precious promise which I have now read, the promise of the speedy coming of the divine Paraclete—"And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever."

1. Notice, at the outset, that the blessing promised was to come in connection with the prayer of Jesus, "*And I will pray the Father*, and He shall give you another Comforter." We are not, however, to suppose that the prayer was absolutely necessary to the coming of the Comforter. The Spirit and the Father were as much interested in the work of the Son as it was possible for the Son Himself to be. When we speak of the prayers of Christ we must remember that they are to be

broadly distinguished from our prayers. We make confession of sin; we invoke divine forgiveness. There is no confession of sin in the prayers of the Son of God; no invocation of pardon is anywhere to be found in these petitions. He had no sin to confess; He needed no forgiveness. His prayers are not those of an inferior to a superior, not the prayers of a suppliant beseeching for a gratuity; they are simply the declarations of His sovereign will, He standing on the platform of conscious equality with God the Father. Any other conception of Christ's prayers will be false to the true exegesis of the passages in which they are mentioned, and false also to Christ's character. The very words here imply Christ's conscious equality, familiarity, and perfect intimacy with God. His prayer is simply a declaration of His sovereign will to His Father, asking for that which He knows the Father loves to bestow. God is always represented in the economy of redemption as the source whence all streams of blessing flow; or, changing the figure, He is represented as the great foundation on which the magnificent superstructure of redemption is erected. There is, then, the most entire harmony between the sacred Three in all the work of man's salvation. We have in this verse, in a very striking way, all the three persons of the Trinity present for our contemplation. It is rare that you have each person of the Trinity suggested so clearly within the compass of a single verse. The Son is represented as on the earth offering His prayer, the Father as giving the Spirit, and the Spirit as coming to comfort the disciples.

Our Lord on another occasion brought out very fully for us the work of each person in the Trinity. I refer to the occasion of the nocturnal visit of Nicodemus to Jesus. If you will go back to that instance you will re-

member that nowhere in all the epistles, and nowhere else in the gospels, is the work of each person of the Trinity brought out so clearly. The very fact that it was a secret interview with an intelligent man and an earnest inquirer, explains Christ's full and free revelation of Himself. It is full of significance. Men have said that Christ changed His methods of instruction toward the latter part of His life ; that He became bitter, and uttered invectives against the Scribes and Pharisees, because of the disappointment of His entire career. The interview with Nicodemus occurred before the delivery of the Sermon on the Mount ; and in that interview He clearly teaches us that He understood He was to die. The cross lifted itself gloomy and grand before Him in that interview. He saw Himself dying thereon. He taught us then that "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life ;" that "as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up." You have in this conversation attention directed to the work of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit in human redemption ; and in the compass of the text you have that same broad range of truth suggested. Here we have the Trinity in sublimest, divinest harmony in the work of human redemption, and the Spirit promised in connection with the prayer of Jesus.

2. You notice, in the second place, that the blessing promised is that of another Comforter—"And I will pray the Father and *He shall give you another Comforter.*" The word translated Comforter is found only in the writings of John. You look in vain for it in all other portions of Scripture. We have it four times in the Gospel recorded by John, as coming from the lips of

Jesus. We find it once in the first Epistle of John, 2 : 1. In the Gospel, where the word is used by Christ and is applied to the third person of the Trinity, it is translated Comforter ; in the epistle, where it is applied to Jesus, it is translated Advocate. In both instances the word is the same ; it is the divine Paraclete.

Commentators divide at the interpretation of this word generally into two classes. The first class prefer to translate the word Paraclete by our word Comforter ; the other, Advocate. The fact is that there is no one word in our language which will adequately express the idea of the word Paraclete. The word Comforter is too specific, too limited in its range. The word Advocate is admirable when applied to the work of God the Son, as the word is used in the passage in the epistle, to which I have already referred ; but neither is broad enough and comprehensive enough to express all the richness, glory, and blessedness of the idea wrapped up in the word Paraclete. If we look at the word itself a little more closely, we shall discover that it is made up of a verb meaning to call, to summon, and of a preposition meaning by the side of. So the verb and preposition together mean, one summoned to our side. As concerning the sacred meaning, it comes, of course, to be one summoned to our side to render us spiritual help. It means not simply to comfort us in sorrow, not simply to advocate our case before a judicial tribunal, but also to perform many other offices. Our word Comforter comes to us from Wyckliffe, and he doubtless used it in the sense of the Latin *confortari*, which has a broader meaning than comfort, as we now use that word ; the word comfort doubtless had the broader meaning earlier in the history of our language, meaning to strengthen greatly.

We have only to remember that in Oriental countries,

and in ancient times, it was quite common for those who were summoned to appear before courts to have friends come as their patrons ; these were called in Greek *paracletes*, or, using the corresponding term in Latin, *advocates*. They were not hired pleaders ; their services were gratuitous. They were generally men of large social influence, sometimes men of political power, and they stood by the person arraigned before the tribunal, to give their legal knowledge, their social influence, and to help in any one of the many ways in which it was possible for them to render aid. Exactly that idea is included in the word Comforter. A prominent part of the office of the Comforter, especially when Christ spake the text, was to give comfort in the simple, natural, ordinary sense of that term. That the disciples needed ; but it was only a part of the work of the divine Paraclete. His work is fully specified for us later in the chapter. He was to guide the disciples into all truth ; He was to take the things of Christ and make them known to them. Looking at the history of the Church we see what the work of the Spirit has been in different ages and countries. In the Reformation period, as Dr. Owen suggests, His work was that of an Illuminator. The Word of God had been sealed ; the Spirit's influence came to illumine the sacred page and the minds of its readers. There was a twofold blessing given to the disciples as they walked to Emmaus ; their eyes were opened and the Scriptures were opened. There was this twofold blessing all through the period of the Reformation. Only the Spirit, through whose guidance these words were written, can rightly interpret these words. Only as they are read in the light that He bestows can they be understood. No one can fully interpret the Word of God but the Spirit of God. You bring from the Word what you

have eyes to see ; you find what you have discernment to discover and hearts to understand. No man can enjoy the ocean but he who has oceans in his soul ; no man can appreciate mountains but he who has mountains on his brain. No man can understand this wondrous revelation of God if he have not the Spirit of God in his own soul. It thus comes to pass that many simple-minded Christians, with no show of learning, understand the mind of the Spirit better than profound scholars who have not the mind of the Spirit. This is in harmony with a general law. To one man, even Raphael's "Transfiguration" is only so much painted canvas, while to another it is a work of matchless beauty and transcendent genius. The latter has trained eyes to discover its beauty, and cultivated taste to appreciate the triumph of its peerless art. So with the Word of God. In the time of the Reformation, the work of the Holy Spirit was to illumine. Take the time of Carey, Judson, and other of our great missionaries ; then the special work of the Spirit was to awaken the desires and hearts of His people to their duty in spreading the truth. I think to-day the influence of the Spirit is on the side of practical Christianity ; on the side of all forms of practical benevolence—the reaching down to the lowly, and using all the power of truth, and all the agencies of the Church of God for the conversion of men.

There never was a time when the Church was more practical than to-day. Men sometimes have the idea that the best times of the Church are in the past, that the world is growing worse. It is not. The Church was never more intelligent, more benevolent, and more consecrated than at this time. The world is feeling the blessed influence of the Church, lifting it to a higher plane and supporting it thereon. This is, in my judg-

ment, the special work in which the Paraclete is using His influence now. You see, therefore, both from the meaning of the word itself, and from the actual work of the Spirit all through the history of the Church of God, that the word Comforter or Advocate is too limited to express the full idea which God has wrapped up in the word Paraclete. Light also comes upon it from another quarter, and that is in the use of the word "another" in this connection. We are taught, that what Christ was to the disciples, that the Spirit would be to them and to us. We are taught that He was to take up, continue, and complete the work which Christ began. Christ Himself had not ceased as their Advocate, but He had changed the sphere of His activity. He is now our Advocate with the Father, and the Holy Spirit is the Father's Advocate with us. There is thus a twofold process of advocacy constantly going forward, Christ pleading with God for us, and the Spirit pleading with us for God. Whatever Christ did, therefore, during His personal ministry, that the Spirit was now to continue to do; for He was to be another Paraclete. Christ's work during His ministry was not only that of a Comforter, but more. And now He tells us as He is about to go that the Spirit will be another Paraclete. The Spirit is here to do similar service, to carry forward the work to the triumph of the Church, the conversion of the world, and the glory of the Triune God.

3. You will notice, in the third place, that we are taught here that the Spirit is to have a permanent residence in the Church; that "*He may abide with you forever.*" This is the dispensation of the Spirit. I have called your attention before to the fact that, on the day of Pentecost, we had the incarnation of the Spirit. In the manger at Bethlehem we had the incarnation of

the second person of the Trinity, and on the day of Pentecost we had the incarnation of the third person of the Trinity. Christ had been in the world for limited periods previous to His coming for thirty-three and one half years. So the Spirit had been in the world previous to His incarnation on the day of Pentecost. But just as Christ, after His birth in the manger at Bethlehem, was incarnated in a fuller manifestation, so on the day of Pentecost the incarnation of the Spirit was more complete and glorious.

I have long felt that we make too little of this wondrous truth ; long felt that only in a limited sense ought we to pray, "pour out thy Spirit." He is here. Human souls, redeemed by divine grace, are the "temples of the Holy Ghost." When Christ was here, He was not in a temple ; He only tabernacled, only tented. This is distinctly stated : "The Word was made flesh and dwelt, tented, among us." The difference between a tent and a home is suggested by the contrast between Christ's temporary residence and the Spirit's permanent abode. Before the Exodus, the children of Israel tented, and had also a tent as God's house. But when they had possession of the land, when the throne was established, then God was no longer to be worshipped in a tent, but in a temple. Precisely as Israel dwelt in a tent did Christ tabernacle in the flesh ; but the Spirit's presence is permanent, for the promise is that "He may abide with you forever." Christ could not abide ; that was not the plan in the unfolding of the eternal thought of God in human redemption. Each person in the blessed Trinity had His part to perform. Christ performed His in His perfect life and atoning death, and in His glorious ascension ; He continues to perform it by His intercession at the right hand of God. I think it fitting, as

illustrating this thought, that I should once more remind you of the relation between the "Acts of the Apostles" and the Gospels. The book might better be called the "Acts of the Lord" than the "Acts of the Apostles." There is no evidence that the title was given by divine inspiration, no evidence that it was affixed by Luke. It is not the work of the apostles to which our attention is chiefly directed; it is still to the work of the divine and ascended Redeemer. This is suggested in the opening of the book: "The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus *began* both to do and teach, until the day in which He was taken up." And now he goes on to tell of all Jesus *continues* to do after He had been taken up. Christ is still working. His pierced palm is on the helm of the universe. His will dominates the world. His power rules the nations. From His lofty watch-tower in the heavens, He is controlling all events for the glory of His name and the triumph of His truth. He continues to work there, and the other Paraclete continues to work here. This, I repeat, is the dispensation of the Spirit. This is another unfolding of God's plan. We saw part of the finished work in the Old Testament; but we see the fullest in the work of the Holy Spirit.

Friends, we ought to emphasize this truth; we ought to exalt the work of the Holy Spirit. We ought to give Him the place that Christ gave Him—that of another Comforter. You have sometimes wished that you might have seen Jesus. If you could but carry yourself back to that time, you would have all the prejudices that the people of that time had. Were you to go to Palestine to-day you would be disappointed. There would be no place except a limited circle about Jacob's well, walking in which you could be sure that your feet were where

Christ's had been. The hands of friends and foes, and the tooth of time, have effaced the physical memorials of Christ's presence. Palestine is not so full of Jesus to-day as is New York. Even Gethsemane would fail to move you as you had hoped and prayed. It would not be a blessing had Christ remained upon the earth in physical form till now. He knew better, for He said, "It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away the Comforter will not come." Christ when upon the earth in physical form had only a local presence. If He were in one place He could not be in another at the same time. But now He is gone, and the Spirit has come, filling the hearts of His people, interpreting His word, carrying forward forever the triumphs of His kingdom. Right in line with this thought is seen the mistake of those who make too much of the premillennial advent of Christ. I think that conception, when unduly pressed, robs the Spirit of something of the honor which Christ places upon Him. This, I repeat once more, is the dispensation of the Spirit. He is here, carrying the Church into the brighter glories of its certain future. If Christ in His personal presence were here, I cannot see how He would control events more successfully than the promised and present Paraclete is doing.

Men are just the same now as were the disciples. When going out to the eastern declivity of the Mount of Olives, some of the disciples asked Christ if He were now to restore the kingdom to Israel, and what did He say? This: "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." Men are more anxious

to be prophets than witnesses. Your work and mine is to witness for Christ, by Christly lives, by pure words, and by noble deeds.

Let us recognize, good friends, the continual presence, and rejoice in the glorious power of the Spirit of Truth. He abides with us forever. Did you notice that word "forever?" Do you think it will be robbed of its meaning at the tomb or grave? *Forever* He is to abide with us, interpreting the things of Christ. Oh, what lessons we are to learn when we are face to face with Jesus in His kingdom, and the Spirit is with us, forever interpreting the things of Christ! May we now be under the continual guidance of the blessed Paraclete! May He lead us into all truth, taking the things of Christ and showing them unto us! Only as we are thus led by the Spirit of God do we prove to ourselves and to others that we are the sons of God.

XIII.

CHARACTER AND DESTINY.

"And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."—MATT. 25 : 46.

WE are this evening to discuss the subject of Future Punishment. It is a solemn and painful subject. Attention has been called to it recently in a variety of ways. This is not to be wondered at. The old ground has to be gone over again every few years, in the case of all truths and errors. A new generation has come up since there has been a thorough discussion of this subject. It is fitting that it be looked at afresh. No lover of truth has anything to fear from the earnest examination of God's Word. Truth may be crucified or for a time buried; but it will eventually come down from the cross, or up from the grave, and take its rightful place on the throne. Truth loves the light. Error alone dreads and avoids it.

Much, however, depends upon the spirit in which such examinations and discussions take place. A controversial spirit is bad always and everywhere. It is especially bad in connection with so solemn a subject as this. An humble, teachable, and devout temper is always commendable. It is absolutely indispensable here. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him." "He that is spiritual judgeth all things." Every science has its peculiar difficulties, which give way only to him who possesses the appropriate scientific spirit. The discovery

and declaration of the truths of God's Word are no exception.

Personal feeling must give way before the eternal verities of God's revelation. Painful though this subject is, I dare not pass over it. If a minister of the Gospel would say, "I am free from the blood of all men," he must also be able to say, "I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." I am not here to apologize for God; I am here to declare His truth. He is able to protect His character and to defend His Word. He needs no apology from any of His creatures. Who are we that we should judge the Eternal? "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" When Christ speaks we are to listen. Ours it is to sit at His feet and learn the words of wisdom which fall from His grace-anointed lips. He knows whereof He affirms. He came from the bosom of God; He returned to the throne of the majesty on high. He voiced the thought of the eternal God. He is the eternal God. He spoke as one having authority. The Word of the Lord Jesus before that of Canon Farrar or Mr. Beecher any day!

It does not seem necessary for me to prove that there is a future life of some kind, neither need I prove as a separate proposition that there is a hell. If it can be shown that punishment is eternal, then there must be a place or condition, or both, of such punishment. It is needless to hunt through the Old Testament chasing after *Sheol*, or through the New Testament after *Gehenna* and *Hades*, wearying you with a statement of the number of times they are mentioned, and the shades of meaning in which they are used. It is admitted by all, who have any definite belief at all on these subjects, that those dying in impenitence and sin, suffer punishment in some form and some degree. Is that punishment end-

less? The answer to this question carries with it all the discussions about hell.

PUNISHMENT FALLS ON PERSONS.

The thing which our text suggests is that rewards and punishments in the future life come upon persons. There are those who endeavor to show that punishment falls on sin, but not on the sinner. Such a conclusion results from a strange confusion of thought. And for the conclusion and the confusion alike orthodox Christians are largely responsible. We constantly hear persons speak of God as loving the sinner, but hating his sin. There may be a popular sense in which this is true. But, strictly speaking, it is impossible, and is misleading. If you think of sin as an act, you cannot punish it, except as you punish the actor. If you think of sin as a state of heart out of which the bad act comes, you can punish it only by punishing the possessor of that heart. How can you punish the burglary except as you punish burglars? The law which could in this case punish the sin and let the sinner escape would be wonderfully popular with burglars. To talk of punishing sin and not punishing the sinner is to talk absolute nonsense.

The words of Christ are in this case in harmony with the necessary conclusions of our reason. He teaches us that in the future life men are divided into two classes. Personality still exists. It cannot be destroyed. A wall high as heaven and deep as hell, separates man from man in the deepest solemnities of life, and in the destiny of eternity. "These shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal." We must stand at the judgment-seat of Christ. Each man for himself must give account for the deeds done in the body, according to that which he hath done, whether good or

bad. When a soul begins the journey of life, it, as a separate soul, starts on an endless journey. Its life is deathless. Every child is born for the eternities. Men and women, you and I must stand before the great white throne. We must see, amid His dazzling glories and supernal splendors, Him whom we have pierced. Every eye shall see Him. How shall we bear the sight? If in the Judge we can see also our loving Saviour, looking forward to that day, we can say: "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

THE BIBLE THE ONLY AUTHORITY.

It is clear that as to the place, the nature and the duration of future punishment, the Bible must be our authority. I assume that it is true. So do the opponents of eternal punishment. We have, then, common standing ground. We, as a denomination, demand a "Thus saith the Lord," for this, as for all other articles of our faith. No man can decide on any general principle how long or how much the wicked ought to suffer. Such questions are too high for us; we cannot scale their heights. They are too deep; we cannot sound their depths. God is infinitely wise and good. What this wise and good Being may see fit to determine no mortal can decide. These questions lie outside the range of human reason. We do not know, to the full, how heinous sin is, as committed against the infinitely best Being in the universe. We know not how far-reaching it is in its consequences. We do know that no sin is self-contained. Its evil influences stretch out in ever-widening ranges as do the circles made by the pebble dropped into the quiet lake. The sins you have this day committed may affect generations yet unborn. The very air, tainted with the breath of profanity, will be a witness against the swearer.

That oath generated an atmospheric wave which has impinged against the eternal throne. It is treasured up against the day of wrath. It has been said that, "The lifting of a hand sends a vibration to the stars." A young man, when dying, exclaimed in agony, "Oh gather up my influence and let it be buried with me!" The wish was vain. As well might one call to the winds to obey his voice. But God knows what sin is in all its consequences. "He is too good to be unkind; He is too wise to err." To the law and to the testimony; let God be true, though every man be a liar. We have simply to learn what God says, and then humbly accept His authority.

DESCRIPTIVE TERMS.

The place of punishment is called in the New Testament, in general terms, *Hades* and *Gehenna*. It is further described in Luke 16 : 28, as a "place of torment;" when the condition of suffering is in mind, it is called "wrath of God" and "second death;" it is "everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." It is "hell fire," "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched" (Mark 9 : 44); "the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone" (Rev. 21 : 8); "bottomless pit" (Rev. 9 : 2); "outer darkness : there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. 8 : 12); "furnace of fire" (Matt. 13 : 42); "unquenchable fire" (Luke 3 : 17); "I am tormented in this flame" (Luke 16 : 24); "blackness of darkness" (Jude 13); "tormented with fire and brimstone" (Rev. 14 : 10); "The smoke of their torment ascended up forever and ever : and they have no rest day nor night" (Rev. 14 : 11).

We are thus taught that the wicked are to be banished from the presence of God and all good; that they will

be under the dominion of unrestrained evil; that conscience will eternally reproach, and remorse forever gnaw; that they will suffer the natural consequences of sin, and in addition the penal inflictions of a righteous God. From all we know of the continuity of law and the permanence of character, it is likely that they will grow worse as the ages pass. Are they in literal flames and chains? They are in that which can best be described by such language. Christ is the Truth. He cannot misrepresent; whether the account which we have of Lazarus and the rich man be a history or a parable, it is true. A parable has its drapery, but the drapery must convey the truth. If other language than that which is used of the misery of the lost would express the truth, other language would have been used. Christ cannot deceive. Christ would not needlessly alarm. We may assert, with Dr. Hodge, that it cannot be literal fire, inasmuch as the devil and his angels have no material bodies to be acted on by elemental fire. What then? Nothing is gained. The condition is such that it can be best described by the terrible images which the loving Lord invariably uses. Oh, the agonies of a lost soul! Christ knew its worth. He knew its awful loss. On the wings of mercy He flew to its relief. He came to seek and to save that which was lost.

ARE THESE SUFFERINGS ENDLESS?

The doctrine held by the great body of Christians in the various branches of the Church, in all ages, is that the conscious existence of the soul is unending; that those who die alienated from God must so remain forever; that repentance is impossible, and that the misery of the impenitent is endless.

IF NOT, WHAT SHALL WE SUBSTITUTE?

If this doctrine be not true, in what way shall we dispose of the soul? Various opinions have been held. It is not our purpose either to state or to discuss these at length. Is the soul *annihilated?* So some have affirmed. Gross materialists make thought a secretion of the brain. It is the brain in motion. They know no soul. Man is an animal. He is a vegetable. He is what he eats. Carlyle calls this "the gospel of dirt." Its "god is its belly." It is abominable. It degrades a minister to refute it. Its refutation is an insult to you. Are you no better than animals? Others assert that no man has a soul until he is converted. What, then, may we ask, is converted? The life Christ gives the righteous is immortality; the death of the wicked is extinction of life, it is said. The second death may be protracted and painful, but it will come, say the advocates of this doctrine. Annihilation is the vain hope of men consciously wicked, and, therefore, fearful. It is weak and cowardly. I unhesitatingly affirm that no satisfactory evidence in its support can be found in the Bible. The Bible, legitimately interpreted, conveys the opposite meaning. I cannot pause long on this. Any man who will affirm that the words "life" and "death" in the Bible are to be used in the limited and degraded sense in which Annihilationists use them, advertises his utter inability to interpret any document. Can God annihilate a soul? The question is asked with all reverence. He has degraded, but He has not annihilated Satan. The immortal in Satan and man is a spark of the divine flame. Can God annihilate Himself? A belief in this doctrine unspeakably degrades the whole scheme of redemption.

Did God give His only begotten Son to the shame and

agony of the cross merely to save men from annihilation? Was this the purpose of Christ's wondrous birth, glorious life, atoning death, victorious resurrection, and triumphant ascension? If annihilation was the "end-all" of the wicked, the cross of Calvary was a stupendous blunder. To say that annihilation is the eternal punishment of the wicked is nonsense. Can you punish those who have ceased to be? Can you punish a nonentity? As well might you talk of punishing those who were not born. Oh, men and women, you are immortal! Intrenched within its own immortality the soul defies death. It smiles at the dagger. It cannot die. Where will you spend eternity? What will you do with that immortal and priceless treasure? Christ came to seek and to save you, not from annihilation, but from sin and hell, and to purity here and eternal bliss hereafter. Commit your souls to Him.

Does a *second probation* help the matter? Some have assumed that punishment is reformatory; that when it accomplishes its end it will cease, and that all sinners, men and angels, shall yet be restored to the favor of God. Origen taught this. This assumption contains many errors. It assumes that men who have despised one probation would improve a second. What right has any man to think he would do so? What inducements to repent could God offer men then which He does not offer now? The Atonement of Christ and the sanctifying power of the Holy Ghost are the means of salvation. These are never offered in hell. A man's salvation is less likely then than now. Is it hard to be a Christian now? Now you have Christ with extended arms and loving heart. You have an open Bible. You have a preached Gospel. You have prayer-meetings and Sabbaths. You have praying parents and friends. Will it

be easier to repent in hell? There you will be banished from God—under His curse, in unspeakable torments, without grace, without hope, and with lost men and devils for your companions. A second probation! Why not a third? Repentance, salvation in hell! Is hell more potent to subdue a proud heart than the cross of Calvary? If so, again I say, that the cross is a stupendous blunder. I speak to those who trample over a mother's prayers, who pass by the bleeding love of Jesus as an unholy thing, and press their way to perdition. What can God do for you there? God has already exhausted Himself! What more can He do than He has done to save you? I am not debating a controverted point. I am striving to win your soul. Lord Jesus, have mercy on these despisers of Thy love!

Another false assumption on this point is that punishment is reformatory. Is this so? Is this its natural effect? Are there not thousands of men in prison who are hardened tenfold by their punishment? Even while the law has its firm grip upon them, they are plotting deeper wickedness. Suffering, *per se*, has no purifying power. Penalties cannot cleanse the heart. They may satisfy human law for past crimes, but cannot insure against future sins. God does not always inflict punishment with the design of reforming men. The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah can scarcely be called a reform measure. Their cup of wrath was full. God held it with outstretched arm over the doomed cities. His servant ceased praying. The cup was poured out. The terrible monument of God's wrath was all that remained of the once great city in the beautiful vale of Siddim.

The death of Ananias and Sapphira was rather more than a reform measure. In these cases God has permitted us to get a glimpse of His workings. Could we

see His "ways" as plainly in other cases, no doubt the history of the race would show tens of thousands of just such reform measures. How terrible must be the ingratitude, and how awful the blindness of men who are despising the means of grace to-day, and are looking forward to perdition as a school of reform! Satan has suffered long. Has he reformed?

But the Word of God refutes this hope. When Paul says, Rom. 5 : 18, "That as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation, so by the righteousness of One the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life;" or "as in Adam all die," etc., the "all" is limited by the context. Where it is said that He will have all to be saved, it teaches not His purpose to save all, but rather that He delights not in the death of any. All the positive evidence which we shall shortly use to establish the truth of the text, confutes the belief in a second probation or a restoration.

But grant that this view were true. Why should men go to heaven by way of hell? Why spend an age in the flames of woe, or even a day, or an hour; why go at all to the chambers of perdition, when God has opened a way by the cross? I put it to you now. Am I not right? God invites you. Jesus waits to welcome you to-night. Soon your doom will be sealed. The eternal allotment will be made. The "great gulf" will be fixed; and he that is unjust and filthy will be unjust and filthy still.

Come, then, to Jesus now. He graciously invites; He patiently waits. Flee now to the cross, to the feet, to the heart of Jesus Christ and be saved with an everlasting salvation. God grant it, for His name's sake. Amen.

XIV.

FUTURE PUNISHMENT—WHAT?

"And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal."—MATT. 25 : 46.

ONCE more we approach this deeply solemn subject. Only as our spirit is tender and prayerful, teachable and submissive, are we prepared to discuss a subject involving such tremendous issues. It is fitting now that we ask and strive to answer some solemn questions.

IS FUTURE PUNISHMENT CONTRARY TO DIVINE LOVE?

If it be found that the Bible teaches the endlessness of punishment, we need not hesitate to accept the doctrine lest it conflict with the justice of God. The human mind is not able to deal with all the elements of the problem. We know that punishment should be proportioned to guilt. It is then asked whether any man's sins in this short life are worthy of eternal punishment. But the length of a man's punishment is not determined by the length of time it took him to commit the crime. It often takes longer to commit a burglary than a murder. Would a lawyer urge as a reason for a light punishment that his client, charged with murder, took only thirty seconds to commit the crime? We judge by the nature of the crime, not by the time taken to commit it. So long as men are sinful, they must be miserable. This law is universal as gravitation; it is eternal as God. We know not what punishment is due to a man who sins against God and His Anointed.

Neither is God's goodness impugned by this doctrine. If sin and misery are here consistent with God's goodness, may they not be beyond? If even the good suffer here, may not the bad suffer there? We must not forget that God is just as well as benevolent. The penalty He imposes on sin is the true measure of its deserts. There can be no conflict between the elements of His infinite perfections. Even God's goodness in its broad application to His creation, unites with His justice in demanding the punishment of the ungodly. But this terrible fact must ever be put alongside of the provisions of God's grace. He has provided a way of escape. He sends none to perdition. Men choose death rather than life. As one of the Puritan fathers said, in substance, "Over every mansion in glory will be written, 'Free Grace,' and over every prison-house of woe, the consciences of the lost will compel them to write, 'Deserved.'" Indeed, God's goodness would be incomplete were it not associated with a righteous indignation against all wrong. Lacking this, God would not be God. Every developed moral nature has this element. We remember Bushnell's remark when speaking of the wrath-principle in God, "Take it away from God and He is simply Brahma—a mere Fate, or Infinite thing, no Governor of the world, but an ideal in the neuter gender of the True and the Good; a Beauty that lies in sweet lassitude on the world for literary souls to make a religion of for themselves. Take it away from man and he is only paste, or, at best, an animal." This element gives majesty to God's character.

If His righteous indignation did not flash out and burn against wrong, we could neither love nor respect him. Ours does. We cannot see a little boy hurt by a big one without feeling it. Never did man love as did Christ.

Never did man denounce wrong as did Christ. His wrath flashed out at wrong. He spoke terrible words. He baptized them in tears of tenderest love, but the tears did not extinguish the fires of His indignation. Read Christ's life with that thought in mind. All pure and noble souls have this lofty and holy indignation. Christ was as terrible a preacher as He was a tender preacher. He was and is King. Men must submit. They must beware how they treasure up wrath against the day of wrath. Oh, the wrath of the Lamb! What incongruous rhetoric this is! An angry lamb! The Lamb of God, not the Lion of Judah, angry! Behold the goodness, ay, and the severity of God!

But let us not forget that society does constantly what we may find that the Scriptures say God does. Dr. Parker, in his chapter on Eternal Punishments in "Ecce Deus," gives some suggestive hints on this point. Society must draw a broad line of demarcation between the good and the bad. Certain persons it admits; others it excludes. Some men it never forgives, never owns so long as they live. Often it follows them with its wrath after they are dead. It dare not honor their memory. This is, so far as it is possible for society to go, eternal punishment. The very constitution of society necessitates this. Even though a man may repent and reform, society must still in some cases condemn him. Society does this in obedience to its deepest moral instincts, why should we be startled if we find that God does the same thing? If we find it necessary to condemn men eternally, so far as our conditions admit, may not God's instincts and the exigencies of His government require the same thing? If we are not shocked at our own course, why need we be at God's?

A STRONG PRESUMPTION.

Dr. Hodge calls special attention to the fact that nearly all Christian churches have understood the Bible to teach the doctrine of the unending punishment of the finally impenitent. This unanimity of belief cannot be referred to any philosophical speculation. Neither, as he argues, can it be accounted for on the ground that the doctrine in question is congenial to the human mind. It certainly is not. It never would be believed for its own sake, if not fully confirmed. The heart unbroken by the Spirit of God, the heart ignorant of its own guilt, revolts and rebels against it. Men have felt that they must accept the doctrine or reject the book. No other explanation will account for its general reception. Christ and His apostles found this doctrine. It was held by many—by the great majority of the Jews. How did Jesus treat it? When did He contradict or correct it? He corrected many errors. If this was one, might we not expect Him to correct it? On the contrary, His teaching tended to confirm it. Would He confirm His hearers in an error of such moment? Who will dare say so? Is there not an argument in this negative testimony?

POSITIVE EVIDENCE.

Christ and His apostles taught most emphatically and solemnly the eternal punishment of the finally impenitent. To leave no room for doubt, the doctrine is taught both affirmatively and negatively; and, lest some might question the meaning of a word, many forms of expression are used to express the truth. If it can ever be taught, it is taught in the Bible. It is taught in the Old Testament. In Isaiah 33 : 14, the question is asked, "Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who

among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?" In Dan. 12 : 2, we read, "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." In the New Testament the language is still clearer. Christ came to bring life and immortality to light in the Gospel. He came also to bring darkness and death to light. Both classes of truths were known before; but on both He shed a fuller light. Indeed, Christ uncovered the pit. We had scarcely known it but for Him. It is now said as a reproach to some men that they are "hell-fire preachers." Christ was the first and the greatest preacher of this class the world has ever known. No such "woes" ever fell from human lips as fell from His. His terrific denunciations, warnings, and rebukes are scathing and scorching even now. But His awful authority was evermore blended with a tearful tenderness. There is quite as much love in His threatenings as in His invitations. When there has been a great railroad accident in the night, a bridge having fallen and the lives of thousands imperilled, men are sent up and down the track with colored lanterns to warn approaching trains of their danger; they are simply revealing it. They are ministers of love. When our streets are undergoing repairs, lights are hung around the openings made. These are signals of danger. They are erected in love. Parents are loving, when they say, "My child, there is danger there. Go not near. Avoid that place. Pass not near it." So Christ did not, in a very true sense, create hell; He revealed it. It existed before He came. It would have existed had He never come. He revealed it. He warned us against it. He provided a way of escape from it. In all honesty and love, and with a tremendous earnestness, He warned us of our great dan-

ger. It was with such feelings He said, "Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. 25 : 41). "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal" (Matt. 25 : 46). In Mark 9 : 43, 44, Christ says: "It is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." Attention has been called to the fact that these awful words are uttered three times by our loving Lord in a single discourse, as recorded in this chapter. In Matt. 8 : 12, we read, "But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." In Matt. 13 : 42, we have the expression, "And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." Luke 16 : 24, "I am tormented in this flame," expresses the misery of the lost. In John 3 : 36, we have, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." Paul teaches us, 2 Thess. 1 : 9, that there are those "Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power." In Jude, sixth verse, we read of the angels which kept not their first estate, that they are "reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." In Rev. 14 : 10, 11, "The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment

ascendeth up forever and ever, and they have no rest day nor night."

IT IS ASSUMED ALSO.

It is said of Judas that it had been better for him had he never been born. This implies that his punishment would be eternal. For if there should come a time, even after ages of suffering, when he should be admitted to the unspeakable and endless bliss of heaven, then existence would be a blessing. The blessings of that heaven would infinitely overbalance the miseries of hell for a limited time. Of one wicked man, at least, we know that his sufferings are endless; if of one, why not of all wicked men? Of one class of sins it is positively affirmed that there is no forgiveness, either in this world, or in that which is to come. That does not imply that in the world to come there is forgiveness for any sins. It is a strong expression to assure us that there is no forgiveness anywhere for the sin in question. So also is the account of Lazarus and the rich man. That parable or history proves that there is a place of torment, a hell; that men consciously endure indescribable sufferings, that these sufferings cannot be alleviated, and that no further warnings will be given than are given by Moses and the prophets. These truths, and others also, are clearly taught.

It is claimed, however, that the word "everlasting" is sometimes used of limited duration. We grant it. But when it is applied to a limited duration, it is still a duration whose termination is unknown. It is, therefore, practically a limitless duration, even when applied to material things, as "everlasting hills." When applied to immaterial things, its meaning must accord with the nature of the things to which it is applied. When

we have no authority, either in the nature of things or from any other source, to limit its meaning, it is to be taken in its full literal sense. Dr. G. W. Clark, in his commentary on our text, tells us that the word *aionios*, translated in one clause of the text, everlasting, and in the other, eternal, is used in the New Testament seventy-one times. Three times it refers to the long indefinite past. (Rom. 16 : 25 ; 2 Tim. 1 : 9, where the phrase is translated "before the world began," and Titus 1 : 2.) Twice it is applied to complete eternity without beginning or end, once of God, once of the Spirit which was in Christ, and fifty-one times to the future happiness of the righteous. Seven times it is used to describe the future misery of the wicked, and in the remaining cases it involves the idea of an unending future.

But the Bible is not confined to this word. Lest some might claim that it is ambiguous, Christ gives us many instances of such language as we have before quoted, fire that is unquenchable, worm that never dies, fire that ascendeth forever and ever, and many other phrases of like import. The Greek language, with all its marvellous exactness and facility of expressing shades of meaning, possesses no more emphatic words to express the idea of endless duration than the words which are employed to describe the punishment of the wicked. If Christ ever meant to teach this doctrine, He uses in the text, and elsewhere, the very words to express it. If these words do not teach it, it cannot be taught. Grant, for the moment, that Christ intended to teach it ; He knew the language He used ; He was familiar with all its shades of meaning. Suppose that you wished to teach it, and were equally familiar with the language, I assert that you would use precisely the language which Christ has used. Christ knew well, when He uttered the text,

that the great majority of men would understand Him to teach this doctrine. If He did not mean to teach it, He has knowingly led thousands into grievous error. This we cannot believe of the great Teacher. He would not produce unnecessary fear and terror. He would not mislead. The word used in the text to describe the perpetuity of the misery of the wicked is in the original precisely the same as that which expresses the unending happiness of the righteous. If one is limited in duration, so must the other be limited. The proof that the righteous will be forever happy rests on precisely the same ground as that the wicked will be forever miserable. Close hell and you must close heaven also. The logic that ends either ends both. Are we prepared for this conclusion?

I affirm that there is nothing in the Scriptures which even remotely suggests—far less declares—that the sufferings of the lost shall ever have an end. All our reasoning of the permanence of character and the increasing ratio of evil is along the same line and leads to the same conclusion. Before these plain and solemn truths of God's immutable Word we bow in submission and awe, saying, "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight."

TO CONCLUDE.

On this whole subject I would say, first, God sends no man to perdition. Mr. Beecher, in his recent sermon, put up a man of straw. He attacked him vigorously; he trampled on him triumphantly. But after all, he was only a man of straw. We know no such conception of God as that preacher ascribed to the orthodox. His severe asseverations were needless, not to say more. The Bible nowhere represents God as sending men to

hell. We know no orthodox preacher who so presents God. God offers life ; men choose death ! God cannot put men by physical force into heaven. It would not be heaven to men entering it in that way. If all hell were transferred to-night to heaven, it would still be hell. The ruffian from the street, or the vile saloon, would find the sweetest prayer-meeting ever held a very dull and stupid place. He would long for his revelries and debaucheries. Such a man, if taken to heaven, would find it an utterly intolerable place. Take a savage into your library and drawing-room, show him your treasures of art and your gems of literature ; and the man will be inexpressibly miserable. He needs a change of taste. He needs conversion. Do you love Christ now ? Are His presence and His service irksome to you now ? What, I ask, would you do in heaven ? It would be hell to you. It is merciful in God to banish from His presence those who hate Him. There is no heaven anywhere for a man who hates God. God cannot make a heaven for such a man. There is no hell anywhere for a man who loves the Lord Jesus. The devil cannot make a hell for such a man. If we can imagine such a man's going to hell, it would cease to be such to him, and would become heaven. A man who hates God has the beginnings of hell in him now, as Milton's Satan says,

"Which way I fly is hell ; myself am hell."

An ungodly man carries hell in his heart. He cannot get away from himself. God cannot help him except he comes to God's terms. This is true—*every man will go where in his deepest nature he desires to go.* That statement will bear examination. Do you say no man desires to go to hell ? I tell you thousands desire to live a life which must end in hell. Look at their lives. They

are in it, so far as is possible, now. Look at their haunts. Look at their hearts. They love sin. They must reap its fruit. What men sow they reap. They must not expect to sow the seeds of vice and reap the fruits of virtue. Many a man desires the honors of wealth, but is not willing to make the necessary sacrifice to earn it. Then he in his deepest nature does not desire wealth. He likes ease better. Many a man would like the fame of learning; he is not willing to pay the price in honest work. Then he does not desire learning so much as ease. Friends, if you are lost you will have committed moral suicide. Remorse will sting you forever. "It might have been," will, indeed, be to you "the saddest words of tongue or pen." Men and women, be wise to-night. You like sin now; you will mourn its fruits one day. Will you be among those who pray for the rocks and mountains to fall upon them, and to hide them from the face of Him who sits upon the throne? The great day of His wrath is coming; will you be able to stand? The old colored woman was right. In answer to the flippant objection that there was not brimstone enough to burn the wicked, she said to the objector, "You take your brimstone along with you." It is true.

Let me say, again, no man in perdition will suffer more than he has merited. The sufferings will be indescribably great; but they will be proportioned to men's deserts. Those who have sinned under the law, will be judged and punished by the law. Those who have sinned without the law, shall be judged without law. Those who knew their Master's will, and did it not, shall be beaten with many stripes. Those who knew it not with few stripes. Punishment is not a matter from the outside so much as from the inside. You cannot punish an innocent man. You cannot help punishing a guilty man.

All who shall be lost know they are guilty. Their mouths will be stopped before God. The heathen cannot be punished for not believing in a Saviour of whom they have not heard. Theirs is a different standard; by that they will be judged. According to it their punishment will be. But how terrible will be the guilt of those who reject Christ! Are you doing it? Hell was prepared for the devil and his angels. If you belong to Satan, you must dwell with his family.

Once more: pardon is here and now, on the authority of God, fully and freely offered to all. Do you shrink from the thought of God's inflicting eternal punishment on the ungodly? Are you wiser, are you more loving than God? Compared with His love a mother's is "as moonlight unto sunlight, as water unto wine." He gave the Son of His love to save you. Would you know your soul's danger and worth? Would you know God's love and mercy? Then stand beneath the cross of Calvary. See the sun veiling His face in mourning. Observe the quaking earth, shaking as if its heart were breaking. See God's Beloved dying for you. Oh, matchless love; oh, boundless pity; how terrible is my sin; how marvellous is God's love! Hear the voice of your God, as He warns and entreats you: "Why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: wherefore turn yourselves and live ye." "Let the wicked forsake his way . . . and let him return unto the Lord, . . . for He will abundantly pardon." He urges us to reason with Him, and promises to make our scarlet sins white as snow, and our crimson sins like wool. He exhausts Himself in threatening and entreaties. Christ invites "all," "Whosoever," "If any man"—that includes you all now. What more can He say and do? Will you still trample

on the offers of mercy and the blood of Calvary on your way to perdition? You cannot pass down these aisles without either accepting or rejecting Christ. There He stands! You are diseased. He is the divine Physician. He holds out the remedy. See His hands. Each palm bears the print of a nail. The spear-wound is in His side. He steps across the aisle. I put the question: "What will ye do with Jesus, who is called Christ?" You say, Nothing. Stop! Not to accept Him is to reject Him. Will you do it again? Behold the Lily of the Valley. See the Plant of Renown. The odor fills the room. It comes to your senses. It may to-night be the savor of life unto life, or of death unto death. Which will it be? You are transacting business for God and eternity. The righteous spoken of in the text—Who are they? "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." The fountain is still open. Wash and be made white as snow. This large congregation will now separate. We go out under God's stars. We shall never all meet again until we meet at the bar of God.

I have tried to speak faithfully and tenderly. Flippancy or severity ought to have no place here. By the terrors of the Lord I would persuade you; by the mercies of God I would draw you; by the agony of Gethsemane and the breaking heart of Calvary I would win you to Jesus and heaven to-night. If you turn not, you shall die in your sin. Why will ye die? Now accept the offer of God's mercy, and at the last you shall share in His glory.

XV.

BANDS OF LOVE.

"I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love."—HOSEA 11 : 4.

IF you look for a moment at the context, you will see that God is here expostulating with Israel because of their rebellion against Him. He had been very gracious to Israel ; He had not dealt so with any people under heaven. When they first began to multiply into a nation in Egypt, He set His love upon them. When fretful and froward as children, He still bore with them and loved them. With a high hand and outstretched arm He delivered them from the house of bondage. By marvellous displays of His goodness and greatness He fed them with manna in the wilderness, and brought them in safety to the land of promise. Out of Egypt He called His Son. This was historically true of the children of Israel ; it was also prophetic of Him who was their Lord and ours. In this verse and the preceding one, we have two homely, but expressive figures illustrative of God's loving-kindness and tender mercy toward Israel. The first is drawn from the nursery. Israel is thought of as a child in leading-strings, and God as the gentle nurse. The nurse is at one end of the string, the child at the other. The trembling, tottering child is encouraged to venture out and walk forward, because of the strong hand and loving heart which are thus guiding and supporting. The remaining figure is equally homely and

expressive, and to an agricultural people must have been profoundly significant. The picture suggested is that of the careful husbandman moving or pulling forward the yoke or collar from the heated necks of the weary animals. The design is to let the cooling air in between the collar and the neck. Otherwise, the neck might be scalded and the skin be removed. At the end of the furrow the ploughman does this when the cattle stop a moment to take breath. The bridle is removed from their jaws and a handful of grass is given to refresh the weary animals as they turn to follow the next furrow. So God removed yokes from the necks of His people; so God furnished refreshment for them in their weary way. By these two figures He sets before us His patience and thoughtfulness toward His ancient people, and toward His true children still.

But this morning I confine your thought to the first clause of the verse—the first figure here described. It teaches us God's method of leading men into His kingdom, and leading them forward to the service and enjoyment of His Church.

I. THE DIVINE DRAWING.

1. We learn, then, in the first place, that God draws men into His kingdom. It cannot be too strongly emphasized that this is God's work. Christ tells us that no man can come to Him except the Father draw him. This language of Christ teaches us both the necessity of such divine drawing and also its actual existence. Man's inability is not physical. It is a disinclination of his proud will and stubborn heart. It is well for us to learn at the outset our utter helplessness. Only as we learn that lesson can we avail ourselves of the divine helpful-

ness. Men will not cry to God for help until they realize that all other help has utterly failed them. To the proud-hearted no lesson is more needed, no lesson is more helpful than this very humbling one. Men evermore wish to save themselves in their own way. The father of the lunatic boy cried unto Christ. "Lord, have mercy on my son!" He identified his case with that of his son.

This is an opportune lesson for parents to learn. All other help had failed him. He could then fill his mouth with arguments; his prayer was answered; his son restored, and our Lord was glorified. When Peter realized that he was sinking amid the waves of the Galilean Sea, he called out, "Lord, save me." Then the strong arm of Christ interposed, and the sinking disciple was preserved. All night Jacob wrestled with the unknown Stranger. If there was anything for which Jacob was remarkable, it was his self-reliance. His very name, Jacob, is illustrative of his confidence in his own wits. His subsequent history justified the significance of his name. He was the heel-catcher, the tripper-up, the supplanter. All through his relations with Laban his confidence in his own sagacity never deserts him. Neither does it now at this crisis of his life on the banks of the brook Jabbok. Carefully he lays his plans, skilfully does he arrange his flocks and herds and family, and now alone in the darkness the Unknown One approaches him. Instantly the old Jacob is aroused. He relies upon himself; he will fight it out on that line all night, but when the morning dawns he has not prevailed. Now the Unknown One touches his thigh, the pillar of the wrestler's strength. Now Jacob is weakness itself. No longer does he resist. He clings to the Stranger. He entreats His help. His weakness is his mightiest

plea. He prevails in weakness. Though helpless he is strong, and his significant name in future shall be Israel, not Jacob; prevailer with God, not the supplanter of men. In the crisis of every human life there comes, in a more or less marked form, the experience of Jacob. Happy is that man who relies on God in his own utter helplessness, and out of his weakness cries to God for help. We ought not, however, to forget that this helplessness does not destroy responsibility. Many men have erred on this point. They have spoken as if God was responsible for their weakness, and as if no responsibility rested upon them. They have said that they must wait God's time. This is an abuse of the doctrine of dependence.

We cannot think of human weakness aright except as we put over against it God's divine provision for human wants. This is brought out in a striking passage of Scripture, which says, "Let him take hold of My strength that he may make peace with Me, and he shall make peace with Me." You send a letter by a messenger to a friend in Brooklyn. He returns in a little time without having delivered his message. He tells you that the river is deep and broad, and the current is strong, that he cannot swim, and there is no bridge over which he may pass.* Do you excuse him? Is that apology accepted? You recognize the truth of his statement, but you at once ask, Was there no ferry? Of this means of transit he ought to have availed himself. You hold him responsible; you rebuke him for his failure; you almost despise him for his stupidity. While between us and perfect obedience to God there flows an impassable river, God has provided, if we may so say, a divine ferry, and while

* The Bridge was not built when this sermon was preached.

we acknowledge our own helplessness, we must avail ourselves of God's method of deliverance.

There is a divine drawing. Of this truth reasonable men have no doubt. God is drawing by the still small voice of His Spirit. God is also drawing by the thunders of His power. Men say that they will wait God's time, and God at the same moment declares, "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation." God's drawing is governed by the character of the persons or objects to be drawn. Yesterday I stood watching the workmen engaged upon our new church building. A huge block of stone was to be removed. The ropes and chains were fastened, a boy touched a handle governing the power of the steam derrick; now the stone moves uneasily in its bed; now it rises into the air; and now it is swung to the opposite side, and slowly and gently deposited in the desired place. Here was a physical substance. To remove it a physical power was required. Physical power was applied. But *man is not a thing.* God does not so treat him. He will not violate the laws which He Himself has established. He might break down every form of resistance by displays of His power, but this is not His method. He stands at the door of the heart and knocks. He knocks at the door of faith, and hope, and love, and reason. With one blow He might shatter the door and destroy the whole structure. He will not strike that blow. He respects the laws of being which He Himself has ordained. He is the Sovereign, and we know it. He has made us free, and we know it. He will not encroach upon the divinely-given freedom. Involuntary obedience is not obedience. We are to be willing in the day of His power. He regards us as possessed of reason, and He plies that reason with argument. His own language is, "Come, let us reason together." He condescends to

submit His claims to our reason. He regards the affections which He Himself has imparted. He strives to call out these affections toward Himself. He addresses appeals to conscience. In all these ways God honors the laws with which He has endowed us. The bolts on the heart's door are on the inside. You must recognize the divine drawing and rise and pull back the bolts. It is man's glory that he is so endowed. But this is a sublime and solemn inheritance. If men in this dignity of their own yield to God, a glorious future is assured; if they refuse to admit Him, their glory becomes their shame, and their possible dignity becomes their certain destruction.

I beseech you that you trifle not with this divine drawing. From childhood to this very hour God has been speaking to some of you. He has spoken in sunshine and storms, in sorrow and joy, in life and death—you have still refused to listen. You have despised alike His invitations and threatenings. In His name I to-day warn you not longer to resist. You do it at your peril. Your heart is growing harder; your will more stubborn. Your conscience will soon be seared. God will not be mocked. The hour will soon come when you will call and He will not hear, when He will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh. I must press these considerations; my heart longs for your salvation. It asks once more the solemn question, Are you yielding your hearts to this divine drawing? It comes to you gently as the falling dew; it comes to you in prosperity and adversity; it comes to you in the new-born child; it comes to you in the messenger of death that carries your darling from your home and your heart. I beseech you to-day quench not the Spirit; resist not this divine drawing; refuse not the voice of Him that speaketh.

ty is everywhere seen in the Word of God. Only God could open the way for His people through the Red Sea; but Moses must stretch his rod across the waters. Only God could cause the sparkling waters to come from flinty rocks; but Moses must strike the rock with the divinely-appointed instrument. Only Christ could cause the dead Lazarus to come forth; but human hands must remove the stone. Only Christ could change the water into wine; but servants can fill the water-pots with water, and between the filling and the drawing the divine power comes down, and "the conscious water saw its God and blushed." What we can do, that we must do. God will never do for us what we can do for ourselves. God never wastes power. For wise purposes He introduced miracles, but they are ever kept at the lowest possible point. It is simply sublime to see how God honors man in the carrying out of His divine purposes. In every crisis God has His man ready to come forward, perform his work, and honor His great name. When Israel is to be led out of Egypt God has His Moses. By forty years' learning in the courts of Egypt, and by forty years more in the silence of the desert and in communion with God, Moses is trained for his grand work. When Moses lays down the honor of leadership, God has a Joshua, courageous and strong, to lead His people on through trial to triumph. When the Philistines were to be destroyed God sent Samson into the conflict. David comes forward with cords to bind the kingdom into unity and power. When he lays down the sceptre Solomon is ready to carry forward his work to a greater height of national glory. When the enemy seemed to have triumphed and every knee to have bowed to Baal, God had His Elijah, fierce and strong, to stand for the right and to rebuke the wrong; and by the cords of a man God

held back the evil and led the right into light and triumph.

The same truth is illustrated in later days. When the Gospel was to be carried to the Gentiles, God had a man in readiness. First at the feet of Gamaliel and afterward in the deserts of Arabia, God was training the noblest man of the early Church, and, in many respects, the greatest man the world has ever seen. No other of the college of apostles, except Paul, had grasp of mind and energy of purpose sufficient to accomplish this work. When great doctrines were to be formulated, God had His Augustine, trained in the schools of philosophy, a teacher of rhetoric, and a man of eloquence, raised up to declare these great truths. There were reformers before the Reformation, it is said, nevertheless the Reformation gave us only one Luther. There were great scholars, but Calvin stands peerless in his time. When the whole Church slumbered under a dead orthodoxy then God raised up Wesley and Whitefield, whose voices thrilled England and America, and whose influence will be felt to the end of time. The same truths are illustrated in our own day. God is still drawing the world to Himself by the cords of men. Christ said: "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me." An uplifted Christ is the mightiest magnet the world has ever seen. He is gloriously uplifted to-day, and lost men and women are drawn unto Him. The Gospel never was a greater power than it is to-day. Oh, that God would give us power to draw souls to Himself! This is the noblest earthly ambition. Teachers, win your classes to Jesus. Parents, cease not to labor and pray for the children God has given you. God Almighty, give every preacher in our broad land cords of a man and bands of love!

BANDS OF LOVE.

3. The text teaches us, in the third place, that those who possess this drawing-power are furnished with bands of love. All men are not suited to this work; all sorts of cords will not do it. The word rendered "bands" is a much stronger word than that translated "cords." It means cart-ropes. Cart-ropes of love have a marvellous drawing-power. God does not drive; He leads. So must His people. His love constrains; so must ours. Love is simply irresistible. It triumphs over all obstacles; it breaks down all opposition; it wins all sorts of men. It has a sweet language of its own. It cannot be imitated. A great and witty American essayist tells us that he once heard a voice so sweet, that its tones so controlled him that he could have been led at its possessor's will. The love of Christ in the heart gives such music to the voice. God pours out His own soul in these words: "I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee." We shall have power to draw men just in proportion as we possess this love. Men are reached through the heart oftener than through the head. You may put an immense deal of gospel into a warm grasp of the hand. It is said that the aggregate force of the heart-beats of a life-time would pulverize the hardest rock. They will certainly, if inspired by God's love and accompanied by His grace, break the heart of the most hardened sinner.

"Cart-ropes of love." This is a wonderful expression. On the shore of the Galilean Sea, Christ submits Peter to his threefold test. It was a searching time for the repentant disciple. How shall he be prepared for his great work? How be loyal to his Lord? How feed the

sheep and the goats! We learn from this text that the first, the second, and the third prerequisite of the true worker for Christ is—Love. Love will beyond logic; love commands eloquence; love gives rich. Love is better than tongues; the greatest gift is love. It runs works and is endless all gifts besides. This is a glorious illustration which I saw the other day. In one of her books, Anna Shipton tells us that when weary with work and longing for rest, she slept and dreamed that she was drawn through a sea of glass to the Heavenly City. Her soul was filled with delight at the joy which awaited her, but looking back she saw many men and women drowning about her, and hiding with cries to her for help. She tried with God to permit her longer to remain that she might rescue them. Her prayer was answered. Soon she was again home-bound, but not now alone. Many now were following. They were drawn by her heart-strings. These were the cables, the outstretches of love which drew the despairing and drowning to God and glory.

Love has ever constituted the great workers for God. In silence and sorrow they have lived and loved. What giants of faith and love Christianity has produced! The names of many are conspicuous on the world's historic page. The names of many more are unknown to fame. Their record is on high. In dungeons, deep and dark, their gentle ways were tables of love; in the home of the poor they were angels of mercy. The world knows them not; God knows them well. Their names are in the Lamb's Book of Life. The world has only one Niagara. It needs only one. Magnificent as it is, it is less useful than the thousand brooks which flow through green fields and give drink to man and beast. Silent forces are always the mightiest. Rare water is drawn up into the heavens

in the silent hour of a summer's noon than could be drawn by the noisy engines working a year throughout the world. Gentle souls pass through the world silent as the falling dew ; they leave the benediction of their presence wherever they go. God multiply their number ! Oh, for the cart-ropes of love ! Lord Jesus, draw us, and we will run after Thee ! Give us Thy love and we shall draw others to Thy blessed feet !

In a book entitled " Lights and Shadows of Scottish Life," there is told a story to this effect : A Highland mother one day left her babe sleeping by the fireside in her humble cottage. One of the gigantic eagles of the region seized the infant, and in its strong talons soon bore the babe to its lofty eyrie. The whole village was aroused ; but the hearts of all sank in despair. Now a brave sailor appears. He tries to climb the rugged rock. He, surely, will succeed ; he is accustomed to lofty heights, but his limbs tremble, his courage fails, and he gives up the attempt. Next comes a robust Highlander. He is a shepherd. Often he has scaled the mountains ; often he has borne lambs in his bosom. He climbs a little way, he stops, he clings to the rock, he falls to the bottom. But see this pale-faced woman ! Her eyes are wild ; her heart beats wildly. Make way for her through the crowd ! she will climb that rock. Who is she ? What impels her ? Your hearts answer well. She starts. Up she goes. She hesitates. Will she give up ? Is she going to fall ? No, no. On she goes. Now on this shelf of rock ; now the next. How the hearts of all tremble ! Up she goes. God have mercy on her ! God be praised ! Look ! she has reached the top of the cliff ; she has the child in her arms. Down she comes, step by step. There she stands amid the joyous, grateful crowd, with the babe pressed to her bosom ! What

made her succeed, while sailor and shepherd failed? I need not tell you who she was. Between her and that child were cables of love. Cart-ropes of love drew her to the cliff's top.

Friends, on dangerous heights and in deadly depths are the lost all about us. Who will go to the rescue? God alone can save. God alone has brought deliverance. But God uses the cords of men and the bands of love. By these He drew us to Himself; by these He is drawing us into fields of service. Oh, for bands of love this day! May we ever hear God saying: "I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love."

XVI.

BEARING ONE ANOTHER'S BURDENS.*

"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."
—GAL. 6 : 2.

SOME passages of Scripture seem to be direct contradictions of certain other passages. Life is called death, loss, gain, and poverty, riches. To the superficial reader these seeming contradictions are real. To the closer student of Scripture and observer of life they are perfectly harmonious. In this respect life in all its phases corroborates the statements of revelation. We everywhere see contradictions and paradoxes. Life is constantly set over against death ; sorrow is opposed to joy, and other direct opposites are strangely linked together in every relation in which men are called to act their part in the mysterious drama of life.

Every one who has read the chapter from which our text is taken has observed this seeming contradiction. In the second verse, which is our text this morning, we read, "Bear ye one another's burdens," and in the fifth verse we read, "For every man shall bear his own burden." The injunction to "bear one another's burdens" is clear and explicit ; and the direct statement that every man shall bear his own burden is equally clear and explicit.

The actual experience of life in its various trials recon-

* This sermon was preached May 15th, 1870, being the first sermon of the author's pastorate.

ciles this seeming opposition, and shows how the underlying harmony of the two passages appears. There are burdens which we can bear for our fellow-men; and there are other burdens which each must bear alone. Some crushing burdens there are upon others which with all our tender sympathy and timely aid we cannot remove; griefs there are as the heritage of every child of Adam which no human love can assuage; and tears which no human hand can wipe away. Thus it is that some of the profoundest truths of revelation and life emerge from these apparently contradictory statements. As the fire which is latent in the flint and the steel flashes forth when they are harshly struck, so the truth, which otherwise might be hidden, emerges in a clearer light when such truths come into collision.

Truth is many-sided. Now one side appears to the partial or total exclusion of the other, and again the hidden side appears and the first is concealed. On this side of the cube of truth is written the command, "Bear ye one another's burdens;" but go around to another side of the cube, and you read another revelation of actual life, "For every man shall bear his own burden." Both truths are taught in the chapter; both are verified in the experience of us all, and thus where there was seeming contradiction there is in reality the fullest harmony.

The thought underlying the injunction of the text is that *all men* have burdens to bear, and to this thought we first direct attention. Every heart knows its own sorrow. Every heart has a history known only to the individual, and to Him to whom the secrets of all hearts are known. As in every home there is a closet with its skeleton, so in every soul there is a secret chamber in which are buried faded hopes and dead joys. The out-

ward life may render no testimony to this inward grief; the eye may sparkle and the lip smile, but the grief is still there, securely hidden from the observer, but sadly known to its possessor. We remember the story of the Spartan boy, who stole a deadly weapon and concealed it in his tunic; the story is given in different forms. An accidental collision drove the weapon into his body. Discovery and confession would have been certain death, so with true Spartan heroism he talked and smiled while his life-blood was slowly oozing from his heart.

With more than stiletto sharpness do these hidden griefs stab the sensitive heart until the color fades from the cheek, and joy from the life, and death at last claims its victim. Words spoken by us at random may become the arrow that thus pierces; and actions thoughtlessly performed, the grief that thus blights. There is a fearful aloneness in the lives of us all. Up and down life's dusty highway and through its secluded alleys each man walks alone. As individuals we have personal transactions with God; as individuals we must know the joy of sins forgiven and the peace which passes all understanding; or, as individuals we must feel the pain of sins crying for vengeance and of remorse which foretells the death that never dies. Recall this morning that hour when you yielded to temptation, that hour when sin put its deadly mark upon the soul, that hour when the bright dreams of life faded and remorse became the soul's dreadful guest. No more can human sympathy bring to the heart sweet forgetfulness. When the gates of secrecy open and the light of truth shines in upon the soul, these deadly visitors are seen revelling where Jesus alone should dwell. What a fearful burden is sin! From one's own heart and memory one may not escape. Take the wings of the morning and fly to the uttermost parts of the

earth ; but the heart burdened with its memories is still there. On angel's wing mount, if possible, to heaven, and heaven will be the worst possible hell. No sympathy of loved one may remove that burden of sin. Only He who is mighty to save, He who says in words of infinite tenderness, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," can ease the soul thus weighed down with the burden of sin. Bunyan's pilgrim staggered long beneath his burden until his eye caught sight of the cross, and then his burden rolled from his weary shoulders.

But there are burdens which we are bound to bear because of our relation to one another as members of the same human family. While it is true that men with all their sins and other burdens are alone before God, it is also true that we cannot separate ourselves from our fellow-men. We are all parts of a common whole. Each unit is a link in the endless chain of being. We ought not if we could, and we cannot if we would, break this chain. There is a grand truth in the words of the heathen play, "I am a man, and deem nothing that relates to man foreign to me." We too often forget this truth. Our patriotism is too often put into Fourth-of-July orations, our humanity into sermons, and our burden-bearing confined to our own narrow circle. Has Christ been so long with us and yet have we not known Him? Have we not learned from the Pharisee, who in the woman saw only the sinner, rather than from the loving Christ who, in the sinner, bowed and weeping at His feet, saw the woman? Oh, brothers, that man whom we saw on the street this morning bearing the burden of his sins in his tottering gait and in his vice-marked face is still our brother, and we cannot separate ourselves from him. He has a history ; once life to him was fair

and beautiful as it now is to us. He was made in the image of God ; sin has fearfully marred that image, but its traces are seen still. Immortal destinies are his in joy or woe. We cannot pass him by ; Christ would not ; we dare not. We may not be able to bear all his burden ; but what we can bear, as we love Christ, we are bound to bear ; and we can certainly point him to the "Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world" —the Lamb who bore our sins in His own body on the tree. Wherever we see a man, however low and degraded, let us give him the good right hand of a brother man, and "so fulfil the law of Christ." That woman that is a sinner, oh, fair lady, is still thy sister. The relationship cannot be dissolved. The boundless mercy and tender grace of God have made thee to differ. Let pride be turned to prayer and cold disdain to loving pity ; and so shall you fulfil the law of Him who was "the friend of publicans and sinners."

A second obligation binding upon us to bear one another's burdens, is the relation which we sustain to the great brotherhood of Christians.

These words were originally spoken to Christians ; and to them in their mutual relations is their primary application. Separated as we are by denominational lines, and yielding to none in our adherence to "the faith once delivered to the saints," let us still recognize in all who love our Lord Jesus Christ brothers in Christian work and sympathy. While the hosts of sin are pressing hard, the followers of Christ must stand as an unbroken phalanx against the onward march of the enemy. Our aims, our hopes are one. We are to subdue this rebellious world and bring it into submission at the feet of our conquering Christ. The burdens of each, then, must be the burdens of all ; and the triumphs of any branch through

which flows the life of the vine are the triumphs of all the branches which partake of that common life.

Not in any outward unity is the true idea of Christian unity to be found. Outward organizations may give a cold and dead unity, but oneness of aim in diversity of method furnishes the only true unity. Where there is life, there will be diversity; where there is intellectual activity, there will be difference of opinion. But where all draw near to Christ, as the common life and inspiration, there will be a divine harmony beneath the various external manifestations. Let us be fellow-helpers in the work of our common Lord, ready to shield the reputation and bear the burden, as best we may, of all Christ's people. Let us be provoked to greater love and better works in our special sphere of Christian labor by the activities of our brethren in their departments of Christ's work.

A third and most binding obligation to bear one another's burdens, is the relation we bear to one another as members of a particular church—of this church—of Christ. It is a great honor to be a member of a church of Christ. No relationship this side of heaven, outside of the family, should be so tender and true. If rightly appreciated and faithfully observed none can be so full of blessing. Here, at least, we should know no master but Christ, no law but His Word, and no rule but His will. Here, at least, we should know the meaning of the word, "brethren." Perfect social equality, perfect community of feeling, and oneness of tastes, constituted as we are, are not to be expected, perhaps are not to be desired. But these differences cannot separate hearts which throb with love for the Christ whom we adore. It has always been a mystery to me that we have so little of the family feeling in our relations as members of a church of Christ.

In entering upon this relation with you to-day, a relation which marks this day as one of the most important of my life, I may be permitted to speak more personally than would otherwise be fitting. Not unadvisedly and thoughtlessly, but, as I trust, in the fear of God and the love of Christ, do I come to you to-day. The strongest conviction of my life is that God has called me, all unworthy as I am, to preach His blessed Gospel. Long did my rebellious heart strive against the promptings of His Spirit, until the tender love of Jesus, my Saviour, melted me into submission, and I said, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" God has led me by ways of which I never dreamed. He has revealed Himself to me as a tender Father who does not despise the weakest of His children. You have called me here—not you, I hope, but God. I am now yours in Christ's work. Having given Him the early years of boyhood, I now consecrate to Him the riper years of early manhood. Without the experience which comes from age and the discipline of trial, I shall have to ask you to bear with me my burdens; and, as God enables me, I hope to help you bear yours. Our joys and sorrows, our failures and successes henceforth, are mutual. We lay ourselves and all we have and are upon the altar of Christ this morning, beseeching Him for His great love's sake to grant us the honor of spending and being spent in His service.

Let us so illustrate the spirit of Christ that this church shall be in the highest sense a Christian home—a home to which our hearts, and the hearts of many now without God and without hope, shall ever turn. May we so learn Christ that we shall find in His people here the dearest of all earthly society, that young and old shall feel it to be a privilege and an honor to belong to this church of

Christ. If any one is weak that one's weakness is the burden which we are to help him to carry. His infirmity is his claim upon our greater strength. As we would wish to lift a weight which had fallen upon the body of a brother and was crushing out his life, so shall we in the Spirit of Christ run to his rescue when temptation is near, when disappointment has come, and sorrow has taken up its abode in his heart. We cannot stand idly by when the storm is gathering about our brethren. If we feel that we are safe on the shore while they are out on the sea of temptation, while the waves beat, the storms howl, and the sun is hidden, we shall heartily shout, "Ho, men and women! Ho, brother, see the light beyond, there is one star still shining, the Star of Bethlehem. Light streams also from the cross; steer for that light and you shall be safe." We need hearts large enough and true enough to feel every brother's sorrow, hands strong enough to aid, and words kind enough to cheer the weakest saint in his life's battle.

Every day men are tempted to cheat and to lie—to sell their honor, their manhood, their religion, for gain. Who may look coldly on his tempted brother? To-morrow he himself may be that tempted and falling one. Did we but understand the importance and sacredness of our relations as members of the Church of our Lord, did we but warn and admonish our young and weaker brethren in the spirit of Him who prayed for the fainting Peter, did we but learn of Christ to bear one another's burdens, hundreds would have been saved to the Church and cause of the Redeemer, who are now bringing a reproach upon that cause, and the Church would be girded with new strength to win grander victories for her Lord.

We now come to speak of the motive which is to influence us in this work of burden-bearing, "and so fulfil

the law of Christ." Men are naturally selfish, and this natural selfishness leads them to shut themselves up in their own interests. When sin separated man from God, it also separated man from his fellow-men. Sin is always, in the individual heart and in society, a disintegrating force. To enable men to overcome this selfishness, which is the essence of all sin, a powerful motive must be brought to bear upon them. But the influence of an external motive depends, not so much upon the motive itself as upon the state of mind and heart on which it operates. So that in order that the law of Christ may exercise its proper influence upon the heart, the heart itself must be brought into sympathy and union with Christ. If we shall do what Christ did, we must become partakers of Christ's life and spirit by personal fellowship with Him; we must know what it is to put on the Lord Jesus, to live over again His life, thinking His thoughts, and performing, as He may enable us, His deeds. To the heart unacquainted with Jesus and a stranger to His self-sacrificing love, the bearing of others' burdens is utterly repugnant; and the law of Christ is utterly powerless to move to action. But if we have known what it is to die unto self and live unto Him who died to redeem us, we shall find a joy such as the world cannot give, in bearing the cross and fulfilling the law of Christ.

Burden-bearing is here called the law of Christ, and if we are Christ's we shall manifest the disposition which is characteristic of those who are governed by His will. The bearing of burdens, then, becomes a touchstone of Christian character. Whatever a man may say of his faith and his creeds, unless he illustrates in his life the spirit of Christ, we are warranted in saying that he is none of His. Men cannot long hide themselves. Char-

acter is irrepressible. What is in must come out; and the man who professes to love Christ, and yet fails to do what Christ did, is false to truth and Christ, whatever his professions may be.

This is the law of Christ, first, by direct precept. No more tender words ever fell from the lips of the loving Saviour than, when in the hours of agony which preceded the last great trial, He forgets all His own sufferings in His love for His disciples, and bids them love one another even as He had loved them. By thus overcoming the spirit of selfishness which is naturally characteristic of us all, men were to recognize the new creation in Christ Jesus; the world was thus to know the power of the love of Christ in subduing the selfishness, and in stimulating the nobility of human character. These last words of self-sacrificing love on the part of Christ have given us the fulfilment of all the commandments of the Old Testament ritual, and they have furnished the test of all Christ-like character ever since they were uttered. When men rise above the narrow concerns and selfish interests of their own affairs to the realization of Christ's precept—to love one another—they prove, as they can in no other way, the reality and beauty of the religion of Christ. The best treatise ever written on Christian evidences is a life ordered acording to this model. Oh that we could learn what it is to know Christ in His character as a bearer of burdens for others! Oh that we could so drink in the spirit of His oft-repeated precept, until we could feel its power and illustrate its reality in our daily lives with our brethren in Christ! How many there are who are known to Christ—quiet, patient men and women—unaccredited heroes and heroines, whom we may pass by, but whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life. Oh for

the spirit of Christ's precept, to love one another, to bear one another's burdens, and thus prove the reality of our own conversion and the reality of the Christian religion!

But there is a still more important sense in which burden-bearing is the law of Christ—it was the law illustrated by His example. Actions speak louder than words. Christ's example is the best commentary on His own teachings. This law so permeated His whole being that it is seen in every act of His life. In the lofty strains of prophetic song Christ is represented as the Burden-bearer. Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows, the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all, He hath poured out His soul unto death, and He bare the sin of many. The daily scenes which occurred seven hundred years after this prophecy was made most unmistakably proclaim Him to be "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief," the bearer of the burdens of others, burdens which would have crushed the world to eternal ruin. Those years of trial, sorrow, and humiliation, who may fully understand them? Christ was weary and worn as you or I could be, yet He was ever ready to listen to the tale of sorrow and to ease the burdened heart. All day He goes about doing good; at nightfall His weary feet seek the mountain heights for strength to do the work of burden-bearing on the morrow. He takes on Himself the burden of the weeping Martha and the sadder Mary. His burden causes Him to weep and groan; but He bears it away and brings joy for sorrow, hope for fear, and life for death to the stricken household. He is infinitely pure and holy. Sin in all its forms is a very abomination to His stainless purity. But see Him eating with publicans and sinners. The Pharisees stand aloof in holy horror

from those sin-burdened publicans; they would not touch the burden with so much as their finger. They would bind another and greater burden upon the already crushed sinners. Not so with Christ. He puts His own shoulder beneath it; He carries it. In obedience to the tender command, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," the people throng to Him with bodies burdened with disease and souls laden with sin.

Hating sin, He still bears its reproach. Oh, Pharisees, if you are without sin, cast the first stone at her who kneels at the feet of Christ. She bathes those feet with her tears; she wipes them with her hair. Christ might have won great reputation with the Pharisees had He scorned that sinning daughter of Adam. But instead He bears her burden, and challenges and receives the admiration of all noble souls, and the hatred of the world of Pharisees. What a Christ is our Christ! What a Jesus is He whom we adore, and to whom we look to-day for pardon, for guidance, for all we need in life and death, in time and eternity!

We all have certain characteristics of speech and action by which our friends come to know us and speak of us. Hearing certain tones of voice or forms of expression, or seeing certain modes of dress, they come to speak of those things as our style. Reverently we would say that burden-bearing is the style of Christ. It permeates His whole life, manifesting itself even in His seemingly unconscious acts. This is the underlying and unifying principle of His entire life, and His separate acts are but harmonious parts of the harmonious whole. The life which begun on earth by humiliation, ended in a deeper humiliation; beginning by bearing the burden of a human body, it ended by suffering in that body beneath

the burden of our sins and sorrows. Go to dark Gethsemane, if you would learn the meaning of bearing the burden of others' woes.

There are burdens which our friends may help us to bear. They may shield us and protect us from many of the sorrows of life, and if they are inspired by the life and love of Christ, they can help us as even they themselves may not imagine. But the burden of sin which presses on us all, the stings of conscience, the pangs of remorse, no human power can bear, no love of earth, however tender and true, can remove. The man who is a stranger to Christ is thus burdened. He is a voyager without a pilot, a traveller without a guide, a child without a father, a sinner without a Saviour. If God spared not His own Son when that Son stood in the room of sinful man, how can God spare men when they stand before Him laden with their own guilt? If the load of the world's guilt when laid upon Christ crushed Him into sorrow too deep for human thought, crushed Him to death and the grave, oh, how shall any man attempt to stand before God bearing all the burdens of his guilt? As God lives, the soul that has not cast off the burden of his sins upon the sin-atoning Lamb, shall die.

Hear, this morning, you who have no interest in Christ, His words of love, "Come unto *Me*, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Brethren, let us hear the words of truth in our text. "Bear ye one another's burdens;" let us be rebuked and inspired by the life of Christ, so that we may go and do likewise.

XVII.

HUMAN MINISTRY A DIVINE GIFT.*

"And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry."—1 Tim. 1 : 12.

Timothy was a young man of great hope and promise. His marked ability, his good reputation, and his generous character, attracted the notice and won the admiration of the great apostle. A friendship warm and tender was the result.

In the great city of Ephesus Paul earnestly strove to establish a church of Christ. In the very centre of heathenism he would uplift the standard of the cross. Where there were the most magnificent temples to false gods, there should there be a church to the true God. Such success crowned his efforts, that there was danger that the worship of Diana would come into disrepute. A tumult was excited by Demetrius, and Paul was obliged to leave the city. What is now to become of the infant church? He left Timothy there as its pastor, instructing him to teach no other doctrine than that which he was accustomed to teach himself. There were many and great difficulties to contend against. The apostle had intended to settle many of these difficulties; and he was successfully working toward that result. But now he is obliged hurriedly to leave before his plans

* Preached Sunday morning, May 10th, 1874, being the Sunday nearest the fourth anniversary of the present pastorate.

have been perfected, and Timothy is thrust into this difficult position. He is a young man—perhaps not more than twenty. He is inexperienced. Paul, therefore, shortly after his departure, writes him these two epistles. He gives him many specific directions, and he speaks words of instruction and comfort for all ministers and churches to the end of time.

1. The first thing which we learn from this text is that a call to the ministry is a great honor, and furnishes sufficient cause for thankfulness—"I *thank* Christ Jesus," says Paul. Timothy was just beginning his work; Paul was ending his. Timothy had reason to anticipate many difficulties; Paul had experienced all these and many more. Timothy, in prospect of such trials, may have regretted that he had been called; Paul, after experiencing them, and triumphing over them, rejoiced in his call to the work of the ministry. These words of the aged veteran putting off his armor must have greatly cheered the youthful warrior just putting on his armor. He conceived it to be a high honor bestowed on him, that he was called of God to preach the blessed Gospel. It is to the free grace of God that he gives the praise. Paul had had other plans for his future. He never dreamed of being a preacher of the crucified Nazarene. That name once he hated. He bitterly persecuted all who were called by that name. But now the thought that so great a trust had been committed to him, as he speaks of in the verse preceding my text, "According to the glorious Gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust," awakens his profoundest gratitude. The thought also of what he had been before humbles him, and leads him still more to magnify the grace of God; for he says of himself, "Who was before a blasphemer and a persecutor."

This was marvellous grace; this was matchless love. He never became so eloquent as when he spoke of his own unworthiness and the sovereign grace of God.

He abandoned many schemes of high and laudable ambition. The highest positions in the Jewish synagogue and nation were open to him—a young man of such ability and education. But what things were gain he counted loss; and what the worldly-minded would call *loss* he counted highest gain. He exchanged these high hopes of promotion for shame, imprisonment, stripes, hunger. With such an experience behind him, and the prospect of certain death before him, he is still thankful. So ought any Christian man. God gives no man a higher honor than when He puts him into the ministry of the Gospel of Christ. It is a work of toil; it often demands the sacrifice of feeling, of ease and comfort. All prospect of mere worldly honors must be abandoned. In the case of many men, even in our own land to-day, as in the case of Paul, this work is synonymous with poverty, want, and persecution. It is, nevertheless, so glorious a work, that an angel in heaven might almost envy the man whom God calls and qualifies for the ministry.

No matter what sacrifices a man must make, he should bless God that he has ever been called to this work. It is full of blessedness here and now; it has the promise of greater glory hereafter. I have read of a devoted servant of God, one of the early missionaries in Northern New York, a man who knew all the hardships of ministerial life as we younger men do not know them, who, toward the close of his life, said: "I have for fifty-one years preached the Gospel of Christ in the midst of some hardships and many comforts; and though I may truly say that I do not fear death, but look upon it

with great calmness, yet if it should please God to renew my term of office, I would joyfully accept a commission to preach the Gospel clear up to the day of judgment."

I feel deeply grateful to God for His favor in putting me into the ministry. It was not my chosen employment. I cherished the hope of serving God in the walks of business life. Any service is blessed ; this is peculiarly blessed. I am thankful for the opportunity to share, as your pastor, in your joys ; to bear with you your sorrows ; to help you in your intellectual doubts ; to stand beside you in all the conflicts of life ; and I am unspeakably thankful for the hope of standing one day before Christ and saying : " Here am I and the children, in the Gospel, whom Thou hast given me."

2. A second thought in this text is that all ability rightly to discharge the duties of the ministry is the gift of Christ—" I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, *who hath enabled me.*" The gifts of mind and heart required for this work are many and varied. But, however numerous and various they may be, they all come from Christ. He is the source of true spiritual life and power to those who successfully " preach the Word." They need special grace in their *own inner life.* To preach powerfully the truth a man must have felt its power. He must have appropriated it in its saving effects in his own heart's experience. A more hollow and heartless work no man ever engaged in than the preaching of the Gospel when a man has not himself realized it to be " the power of God unto salvation." God save me from such degrading slavery and abhorrent impiety.

The ministry needs the weapons which the highest and most varied culture in science, art, and literature can furnish. Every field of investigation is open ; every lawful weapon is to be used ; but power to do good work

for God is the gift of God in Christ. "All power belongeth unto Me," saith God. In the depths of his soul the minister needs to realize this. He must glory in the cross; he must feel that he is anointed of God to preach. It was well said by a brilliant young preacher, now dead, John Milton Holmes: "The stream can rise no higher than the fountain-head. If the fountain is not far above the ambition, the strength, the joy of the world, then the streams of Zion will soon be dry. In parish life, in pulpit life, in study life, the strength of God must be as constant and as vital as the fresh air. . . . According to the Greek mythology, when Hercules wrestled with Anteus, he could not master him. Anteus was small and Hercules was large. Anteus was puny, Hercules was renowned for invincible strength. Yet Hercules was baffled, because his opponent was all the while receiving thrills of strength from his mother earth. So long as he touched the earth, he was strong and safe. Hercules at last succeeded in lifting him up in the air, and then Anteus, in his own unaided strength, was unable to resist the death-grip of the conqueror. What the earth was to Anteus heaven is to the Christian minister; thence he derives his daily strength, and calmly exclaims, 'I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me.'" Brethren, pray for me, that in all things I may have divine wisdom and power.

3. We learn also from this text, in the third place, that genuine *fidelity* as well as true ability must come from Christ—"For that He counted me faithful."

There were elements of true manliness in Paul before his conversion. He was faithful to what he believed as a Jew. Still he has reference here especially to the faithfulness which grace bestowed on him. Christ counted him faithful, because He made and kept him so

by His grace—making him a steward of the manifold mysteries of God. Nowhere else in God's kingdom are such trusts committed to men; and no one ought to assume these trusts who is not determined, by God's help, to be faithful to them. The Christian minister should be faithful, first, in declaring "the glorious *Gospel* of the blessed God." He must preach the whole counsel of God. He dare not refuse to speak anything which God has commanded. To him comes always the message: "Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life." The true minister has no option. He belongs to Christ. His word is law. The preacher must do his duty. Souls are required of him. Their blood must not be found on him. In the discharge of this duty, he may often have to run counter to the prejudices of his hearers. He must never give needless offence; but he must be faithful. Nothing will ever justify a minister in causelessly wounding the feelings of any; but nothing will ever justify him in withholding God's truth, even at the expense of wounding the feelings of some. A wise man may be faithful, and yet speak so tenderly as to win the love and secure the conviction of right-minded hearers, even when preaching what at the first was unwelcome truth. This requires the wisdom of the serpent and the harmlessness of the dove.

The preacher must be faithful to the interests of the *local church.* He will have many other duties which will demand his attention. He must not forget, however, that he is a pastor of a particular church. But a church must leave the disposition of the pastor's time largely to his own judgment. I know that I am often best serving you by spending my time in my study with my books, when some of you might think I could best

serve you by chatting with you in your parlor. If you have confidence in me, you will be willing to leave many of these things to my own judgment. I recognize at once that you have the first claims upon me. It is in the discharge of these claims that I am often engaged in work for other denominations, and for our own denomination in its city and national work. As a church, you stand in certain relations to the Christian world and the Baptist denomination; and I cannot be faithful to you except I am willing to discharge the duties which these relations make binding upon us. I am, therefore, often doing your work when, perhaps, some of you think I am neglecting it, and doing work which belongs neither to you nor me. Faithfulness to you covers a wide range.

I recognize also, in the position which I occupy, that I am to be faithful to the principles of the *Baptist denomination*. I accept these principles, because I believe they are taught in Scripture. If I did not so believe, I would not hold them for a single hour. No denominational authority could compel me. I became your pastor on a well-defined basis of belief—understood by you in calling me, and understood by me in accepting that call. Now, I affirm that the moment I cannot conscientiously hold these views, that moment I should cease to be your pastor. I received ordination, and was admitted into the Baptist ministry, on the basis of beliefs held now, as of old, by the denomination. These views were well understood by me, and by those who welcomed me into this great brotherhood. Now, I hold that the moment I abandon these views I should cease to call myself a Baptist minister. Common honesty—recognized everywhere among business men—not to speak of higher claims, demands this. All these relations are voluntary. We enter them without compulsion. Both

parties accept the basis of belief. Surely when either party repudiates that belief, the relation should be dissolved, and the name it implies abandoned.

Just now, in certain quarters, opposite views prevail; and men are lauded in proportion as they are unfaithful to their ordination and other vows. Surely common honesty will not always be at such a discount. I greatly admire the course which the Rev. W. T. Sabine has recently pursued. When he found himself no longer able conscientiously to teach the doctrines of the Protestant Episcopal Church, as laid down in its prayer-book and rituals, he quietly resigned his position, and left the denomination. I think he was much more consistent than many in that Church, who practically repudiate its distinctive teachings, and yet insist upon remaining in it—using its name, and enjoying the social position and other emoluments which that name gives. I agree with the views which these men hold in opposition to some of the practices of that Church; but I do heartily disagree with them in endeavoring to retain that connection while holding such views. Is an oath to obey a bishop less binding than an ordinary promise to an ordinary man? It will not do to say that the oath is capable of several interpretations. What is its natural meaning? What was the understanding of the oath mutually agreed to when it was taken? If a man cannot conscientiously obey his spiritual superior, whom he has solemnly promised to obey, he ought to leave the Church over which that superior presides.

These principles apply to ourselves. There are men who were ordained and installed as pastors of Baptist churches on the well-defined basis of our beliefs. These men have abandoned these views. They have a perfect right to do that; no one questions that right. But they

have no right to retain their connection with the churches after they have repudiated the principles on which that connection was formed. Out upon such dishonesty! It is unworthy of any partnership in a business firm, let alone the relation of a pastor to his people. I do not envy the reputation, among all honest men, of those pastors who have been placed over churches by assenting to certain views and who are determined to keep their places, and secure a living, although they have abandoned the principles which procured them their positions. These principles are important. A short time ago in the city of Chicago, one denomination was greatly disturbed, and to-day another in that city is, because of the failure to reduce these views to practice.

Brethren, I will never give you trouble from this cause. When I can no longer subscribe to Baptist principles, I shall no longer claim to be a Baptist. When I can no longer preach the views on which you accepted me as your pastor, I shall cease to be your pastor—I shall cease to call myself a Baptist minister. God forbid that I should scatter and destroy the flock over which He has placed me. I pray that in this, too, I may be "counted faithful."

4. There is this further thought: All true ministers have been put into this service by Christ—"putting me into the ministry." To Paul it was a very real one. He felt that he had been literally *put* into this service. He heard the voice of Christ saying to him: "But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to *make thee a minister* and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee." Paul "was not disobedient to the heavenly vision." I believe in the old-fashioned "*call*" to the ministry; I believe

God now, as in the days of Jeremiah, condemns those who answer when they are not called : " I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran ; I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied." God only can properly call and qualify men to preach the everlasting Gospel. We must never lose sight of this truth. Our fathers made false inferences from it, when they discarded education and other equipments for their ministers. But they were right in emphasizing the truth. God alone can give the tools to His workmen. Education may assist in sharpening those tools ; but even this education, to be successful, must be considered, not apart from God, but as one of His appointed methods, in accomplishing His divine purposes. I thank God that the deepest experience of my life is, that I was called to the work of the ministry. This occasion will justify, I trust, these personal allusions. I could as soon doubt the reality of my own existence as the reality of this call. One evidence that God calls a man to preach is, that He calls a congregation to hear him. I thank God, that He has given us, to a good degree, this evidence. I know it is far from being conclusive evidence that a man is called of God because he has a congregation to hear him ; but I believe that if a man is so called, he will have a congregation to hear him.

I would thank God for putting me into the ministry anywhere. I thank Him still more for giving me a place in this great city. It is a grand city. New York sits like a queen on her island throne. The wealth, the poverty, the good, the bad of the world are brought to her. New York, like a mighty reservoir, draws in brain and muscle from all parts of the country ; and she sends out again her streams to bless or curse mankind. There is no greater centre of brain power, as seen in magazines,

newspapers, and books, on this continent than New York. It is a great thing to strike for God and His truth here, at the centre of influence for this entire country. I feel the inspiration of this great city ; I feel sometimes as if it would swallow me up—as if I could not stem its tide of worldliness and excitement. But if there is much evil here, there is also much good. If it is the worst, it is also the best city on the continent. The largest liberality, the noblest manhood, and the most consecrated womanhood I have ever known I have seen here.

I bless and thank God that He has put me into the ministry in *this church*. I love you all. You were my first, and, thus far, my only love. You took me without the knowledge which age gives, and without the wisdom which comes from experience. You took me when my stock was below par ; if it has come up any since, you deserve the credit, and you shall have the profit.

God has blessed our imperfect endeavors. Our actual membership has more than doubled during these four years. The Spirit has been with us continually. We have striven to develop symmetrical Christian character, and to honor God's Word by giving its study a prominent place in our work. We have cultivated a spirit of liberality in time and money. Never before, in the history of this church, was so much money raised for benevolent objects. More than $70,000 have been given since I became your pastor, four years ago to-day ; and of this amount, $50,000 have been given since October 1st, 1872, and half of the fifty during the past associational year. These amounts do not include all the private contributions ; they simply show what appears on the church books. We have given great prominence to the younger

element in the church, and the result has justified our course. With gratitude we mention the fact that but one of our members has died during the past year, and that the kindest relations exist between the pastor and all the officers of the church.

In the future as in the past, our motto will be: "Christ, and Him crucified." I trust I may be the kind of minister so finely described by a sweet singer:

> "In his duty prompt at every call,
> He watched and wept, he prayed and felt for all;
> And as a bird each fond endearment tries,
> To tempt its new-fledged offspring to the skies,
> He tried each art, reproved each dull delay,
> Allured to brighter worlds, and led the way."

XVIII.

MARVELLOUS KINDNESS IN A STRONG CITY.*

"Blessed be the Lord: for He hath shewed me His marvellous kindness in a strong city."—Psa. 31 : 21.

This psalm is attributed to David. Some writers, however, find in it many resemblances to Jeremiah. Its tenderness and plaintiveness resemble the Book of Lamentations. Competent critics, like Ewald and Hitzig, believe that Jeremiah was its author. The resemblances between the psalm and some portions of the writings of Jeremiah are certainly very marked. But Perowne suggests that the prophet Jeremiah may have borrowed from the psalmist, or that the psalmist—who may have been one of the later poets—borrowed from the prophet. The first of these suppositions is the more likely, and the psalm is David's in all probability. As the same judicious writer remarks: "It breathes his rare tenderness of spirit as well as his faith and courage." Many of the figures are in the most perfect harmony with the manner of Israel's sweet and royal singer.

It is impossible to decide on what occasion it was written. The deliverance referred to may be David's narrow escape at Keilah, or the time when he fled from Saul into the wilderness of Maon. We cannot decide this point. The psalm is divided into three principal

* Tenth anniversary sermon preached on Sunday morning nearest May 15th, 1880.

poets. The first includes the first eight verses. In this part the writer pauses to look on the previous to join and experience the succeeding hills. The second part begins with the ninth and goes to the end of the eighteenth verse. Here the story of the writer's sufferings is told, and God is again brought to life upon him the light of His countenance and he humbles his enemies. The third part goes from the nineteenth verse to the end of the psalm. Here we have praise and thanksgiving to God for His goodness to all who trust Him.

In the next few verses from the general truth stated in this part of the psalm, he has application to his own experience. What is meant by the enemy or Ashdod city? Is there an historical reference to the words? Perhaps so. If so, the city may be Ziklag, a fortified city where David took refuge with Achish, King of Gath. Others suppose that Achish is the city referred to. Perhaps it is better to understand the expression as simply meaning: It is as if David had said, "I am as if in a fortified city."

These words express my thoughts to-day: "I sought to the Lord; but He hath answered me." His marvellous kindness is a strong city." Ten years ago this morning I stood in this place for the first time as the pastor of this church. Not only did I then enter upon my pastorate here, but upon my first pastorate anywhere. I came to you immediately upon the completion of my studies. The Day [illegible] the work was begun. The text on that occasion was: "Know ye not Abraham's brethren, and we hold the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2). In the course of the sermon these words were used: "In entering upon this relationship to-day, I may be permitted to speak more personally than would otherwise be fitting. I am unknown and unheralded, but, as I stand in the

fear of God and love of Christ, do I come to you to-day. The strongest conviction of my life is that God has called me, all unworthy as I am, to preach His Gospel. Long did my rebellious heart strive against the promptings of His Spirit, until the tender love of Jesus my Saviour melted me into submission, and I said: 'Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?' God has led me by ways of which I never dreamed. He has revealed Himself to me as a tender Father who does not despise the weakest of His children. You have called me here—not you, I hope, but God. I am now yours in Christ's work. Having given Him the early years of boyhood, I now consecrate to Him the riper years of early manhood. Without the experience which comes from age and the discipline of trial, I shall have to ask you to bear with me my burdens, and, as God enables me, I hope to help you bear yours. Our joys and sorrows, our failures and successes henceforth are mutual. We lay ourselves and all we have and are upon the altar of Christ this morning, beseeching Him for His great love's sake to grant us the honor of spending and being spent in His service. Let us so illustrate the spirit of Christ that this church shall be in the highest sense a Christian home—a home to which our hearts shall ever turn. May we so learn Christ that we shall find in His people here the dearest of all earthly society, that young and old may feel it to be a privilege and honor to belong to this church of Christ."

These words were spoken ten years ago. They struck the key-note of this hoped-for ministry. Ten years have gone. What of this hope have they realized? They have been marked by many shortcomings and failures; but they have borne constant testimony to God's marvellous kindness in this strong city. They were entered on

with many misgivings; the congregations were small, and the prayer-meetings were neither large nor warm. The pastor could bring neither experience nor reputation. Other pulpits were filled with men who had both experience and reputation. We all felt the need of relying upon God, as if He must do all, and of using our best endeavors, as if we must do all. So the work began; so the years have come and gone. In a spirit of gratitude to God this morning let us recount the "goodness and mercy" which like twin angels have followed us through these ten years. We can say, Blessed be the Lord for His marvellous kindness in a strong city.

1. Because of the material prosperity which He has given us.

Fortunately when the present pastorate was begun, there was no funded debt on this house. There was a small floating debt which was soon removed. Had there been a large debt, probably this ministry would never have been attempted. Great sacrifices were made by my beloved and honored predecessor, Dr. Gillette, and those associated with him. But notwithstanding their sacrifices and their successes a debt at the conclusion of his ministry here remained. During the pastorate of Dr. Buckland, one of our wisest and best men—a brother to whom I am indebted more than any words can express, Nathan Bishop, LL.D.—took the lead in the effort to have the debt removed. He acted simply in accordance with his judgment and conscience, and not under the impulse of any general debt-paying movement, such as we have since seen inaugurated among the churches. It was a great undertaking. The number of members then was small as compared with the present number. Some who were able were not hopeful of success and did not do what perhaps they might have done to insure

success. But the noble man toiled on; others gave time, money, and counsel, and finally the debt was paid, without asking help from any outside sources. It was a grand work, grandly done. All honor to the noble men and women who did it. Had the debt not been removed then, its presence would have seriously crippled us. Hard times soon followed, and perhaps but for the foresight and sacrifice of a few then, we might have a debt to this hour. It is a great pity that other churches did not do likewise. Half the churches that are groaning under heavy debts might have removed them years ago if a like spirit of wise self-sacrifice had prevailed.

In the summer of 1871 quite extensive changes were made in our house of worship. The walls were refrescoed, the wood-work repainted, the floors recarpeted, and a skylight put in, thus relieving the church of its former gloom; at that time also our new and admirable baptistery was constructed. These changes cost us a considerable sum, which soon was promptly paid by voluntary offerings. The next summer we refurnished and refrescoed our lecture-room, at a cost of $1000; and this amount also was promptly paid. During all these years the current expenses of the church, which are about $10,000 a year, have been met, and the floating debt of ten years ago has been paid by the regular income from pew rentals and collections. No special collection has ever been taken to make up deficits; for this result I am heartily glad. It would have made me uncomfortable to feel that friends were making personal sacrifices in addition to pew rents to pay the pastor's salary and other current expenses. Of course our expenses have not been so high as they are in many churches in our great city. If we had a large number of desirable pews at low rates they could be rented even now in this springtime when the tendency is

to go out of the city ; but, unfortunately, we have not. Neither have we ever adopted what is called the "Envelope System." But it is desirable, and it is expected, that every member who can at all afford it should give a certain amount weekly according as the Lord has prospered each. This amount can be put into the basket as it is passed ; and it is to be regretted that a large number of our people have not hitherto felt their obligations in this respect. Even when they are absent from the city the expenses of the church continue, and they should make provision for a continuance of their contribution to its support. Blessed be the Lord for His kindness to us in regard to material support in the past ; and let us all from this day forth strive to contribute more for the support of His cause in this strong city.

2. A second cause for gratitude to-day is found in the peace and harmony which have prevailed during these ten years. Indeed, the same remark will apply, with more or less fitness, to the whole history of the church. But we are more especially interested to-day in the ten years under review. Scarcely during that time has even a ripple disturbed the smooth surface of our church life. We have been at peace among ourselves ; we have been at peace with all our brethren of our own churches, and with those of other denominations. It is a serious matter for a church to assume a position which becomes a source of trouble and misunderstanding among the churches of its own denomination. Seldom, indeed, is a church justified in assuming such a position. Never has there been an unkinder word spoken in a business meeting than the words I am speaking at this moment. Surely we ought to say with the psalmist, "Blessed be the Lord, who hath shewed us His marvellous kindness" in this respect.

But ours has not been the peace of death. We have rather illustrated the apostle's words when he says, "life and peace;" rather a remarkable combination of words. Where there is independence of thought and action in a church of this size it is inevitable that differences of opinion will arise; but where the spirit of Christ prevails these personal preferences will never be pushed so as to destroy, or even to disturb, the harmony of the Church of Christ. The existence of a judicious Advisory Committee, before which all matters of business shall come, has contributed much to the harmony which has prevailed. Much of the business which is introduced into many of our churches ought never to be introduced. Many misunderstandings might be settled without such publicity. Church meetings seldom really settle anything, and business which has to be brought in ought first to be so matured that much subsequent discussion is quite unnecessary. Ordinarily the fewer business meetings there are the better. Some men can talk eloquently in business meetings where a whole evening is given to this purpose, whose voices are never heard in prayer or praise. This committee—as its name implies—is only advisory; it has no legislative power. It is simply the servant of the church, doing the work for which the church has appointed it. It is the pastor's cabinet. With such a committee, a Baptist church can have all the advantages of churches which have Sessions with legislative functions; and such Baptist churches may still retain in full force their democratic character. A little sanctified common sense in our churches, and church quarrels would be unknown. We have never had in this church men who were ambitious to rule. We have often found it difficult to get men willing to take the places to which they had been elected. May God

preserve to us in the future as in the past this beautiful harmony and peace.

3. We bless God to-day for His kindness to us in giving us, to some degree, a missionary and aggressive spirit. We have realized that an anti-mission church is an anti-Christian church. We have learned that often the best way to strengthen the things that remain is vigorously to attack the things that resist. A church that has no missionary spirit is a church for which God has no use, the world no respect, and the devil no dread. Its burial may be postponed for a while, but it is dead. We have labored for rich and poor alike. Every man for whom Christ died is a man for whom we should live and labor. Only those who have no well-recognized social position are afraid to associate with those who may be a little below them in the social scale. Those of assured position rejoice in reaching out the hand of Christian love. Those who are afraid of compromising their position by doing Christ's work are those who have no true position to compromise. We have striven to ask, "Lord, what wilt Thou have us to do?" All other considerations have been secondary. We have taken hold earnestly of our city mission work. During these ten years our present society has been formed. It has been wonderfully successful; indeed, I know of no mission work similarly successful. This church has been from the first its chief supporter. We have given money with a liberal hand, and God has rewarded us a thousandfold. God has given us a great field in this city. It is a strong, a fortified city, and yet it has great elements of weakness. As the metropolitan city of America, first in wealth, first in numbers, first in culture, and first in enterprise, New York exercises a controlling influence on this continent. Every blow struck for truth here echoes from the Atlan-

tic to the Pacific. Secretary Sherman said in New York a few evenings ago that soon New York would be to the cities of America and the world, what Rome was to the world in the days of her imperial splendor and power. We hope she will be more; for New York has what Rome had not, the religion of Jesus Christ. To-day forty languages or dialects are spoken in our streets. To-day the semi-pagan of several nationalities and the "heathen Chinee" swarm in our streets. Foreign mission work has become to a great degree home mission work. We send missionaries abroad, and we do well; and at the same time, God is sending the heathen to our doors. Shall we not teach them? Not less for Italians in Rome, but more for Italians in New York. Not less for Germans in Germany, but more for those in New York. Not less for the heathen in China and Burmah, but more for all these lands and all other lands, as represented in New York—this should be our motto. Here the great problems, social and religious, are to be solved.

And this church realizes this. We are Baptists: but we are more; we are Christians and citizens. We take our place beside men of every name, who are trying to lift the fallen, teach the ignorant, and save the lost. The religion of Christ teaches us that whether a man is black or white, red or yellow, "a man's a man for a' that." There are churches dying of conservatism, propriety, and stinginess. Over them we cannot say, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord." Let us not die the death of these unrighteous. "Blessed be the Lord, who hath shewed us His marvellous kindness in a strong city," in giving us something of the spirit of Christ who came to seek and to save that which was lost.

4. Growing out of this, and akin to it, is another cause for gratitude—the large-hearted benevolence which this

church has shown. The rich have given out of their abundance; the comparatively poor out of their comparative poverty, and those literally poor out of their poverty. We have learned that men's pocket-books should be baptized. We have not much sympathy with the man who had been a member of a church for twenty years, and who said that it had cost him nothing. We teach, that all we have and are belongs to Christ; that we are only His stewards, giving back to Him what He has given to us. It is especially gratifying to me to see how the young men and women have taken hold of that idea. During the past ten years, some have made money in considerable sums; and they have given it with a liberality worthy of all commendation and imitation. If you will not give to the Lord when your income is small, you certainly will not when it is large. Men's hearts usually grow smaller and colder as their incomes grow larger. But when the habit of giving has been early formed it can be easily continued. We have not required the presence of the agents of the various benevolent organizations. The pastor has almost invariably presented all causes of benevolence. The total amount of money raised during the ten years from all services is a little over half a million dollars. Of this amount $100,000 came from pew rentals and was expended in current expenses. The remaining $400,000 was for denominational and general Christian benevolence, making an average of $40,000 each year. The years of largest contributions were this current year, the last associational year, and the Centennial year. The largest contributions have been for our beloved Home Mission Society.

5. We bless God also that He has kept us, as we believe, loyal to the essential doctrines of the Gospel and the distinctive views of the Baptist denomination. We

have no sympathy with that false liberalism which puts human opinions above divine revelation. We believe the Gospel is still the power of God unto salvation. It will never lose that power. The cross is still the mightiest magnet to move men and draw them to God. Away with your human nostrums! We want the old and the ever new Gospel. Sin is still the same, hell is the same, heaven the same. Nothing but the water of life can quench the soul's burning thirst; nothing but the bread of heaven can satisfy its hunger; nothing but the precious blood of Christ can cleanse its crimson stains.

I also recognize that I am to be loyal to the distinctive principles of the Baptist denomination. I accept these principles because I believe they are taught in Scripture. If I did not so believe, I would not hold them for an hour. No denominational authority could compel me. I became your pastor and was ordained by you on a well-defined basis of belief, understood by you in calling me, and understood by me in accepting the call. The longer I study these matters the more I am satisfied of the scripturalness of our views. I cannot be other than I am so long as God's Word remains as authority in our faith and practice. But I also grow in charity for those who differ with me. All men who love Christ and labor for souls, I love and shall labor with, as God gives opportunity.

6. Lastly, Blessed be the Lord, for He hath shewed us His marvellous kindness in the spiritual prosperity which we have enjoyed. It is not as great as we might have had, but it is greater far than we have deserved. We have never had, what in the technical sense is called a revival; but we have had a revival spirit all the time. Every month, often every week, has brought forth fruit. We have sought no publicity; we have not aimed to herald our work; but quietly, steadily, workfully, and

prayerfully we have moved forward. Men in some other churches have come and have gone. They were for a time in the public prints and in the mouths of the people. A comet will always attract more attention than a moon, a rocket than a star; but after comets and rockets have gone into darkness, the moon and the stars will shine on. We have given great importance to the ordinary means of grace; we have had no room for protracted revival efforts; every meeting was a revival meeting; we have had no need of a professional evangelist; every member is to be an evangelist. We have made much of our prayer-meetings, and they have often been to many of us occasions of wonderful spiritual blessings, and God has given us power. Our young people's meetings have grown to be a means of great good and varied activity. A marked feature of our work is the large number of active and devoted young men and women. Our women's various organizations have been managed with great zeal and success. Our Sunday-school has nearly quadrupled its numbers, and in its good order, Bible study, missionary zeal, and contributions, it is surpassed by few schools anywhere.

There have been many pastoral changes in some of our Baptist churches. During these ten years there have been five different pastors in some of our churches. In others four, in others three, in others two. Only six of our churches have to-day the pastors whom they had ten years ago. These pastors are Drs. Williams, Armitage, Norton, and Elder, and brethren Brouner and Spelman. Short pastorates are an element of great weakness in our churches. They make all broad, deep, permanent, and symmetrical work impossible. They demoralize ministers, making them cowardly when difficult questions in administration and other forms of hard work confront

them. No pastor can do good work in his present position if he is all the time striving to get a call to another field. Often this state of unrest leads pastors to resort to means to secure calls which must be despised by every high-minded and noble man. It also robs them of the power to do good, hard study, making them fall back on old material. A man who seeks a call which he has no thought of accepting has done a humiliating thing. In the pastoral, as in other relations, changes are not always for the better. We must bear and forbear. Neither party is perfect. To get a perfect pastor one must be called from heaven, and only a perfect church might presume to call him. I hope I may be the first to discover when my work is done; I hope we shall in Christian love go hand-in-hand and heart-to-heart in the work of Christ.

Many who, ten years ago, were with us are now with God. Of the four deacons then, Deacons Cauldwell, Conklin, Saulsbury, and Jessup, but one remains to us, Deacon Jessup having removed to Brooklyn and Deacons Cauldwell and Saulsbury having gone to their reward. But few have left for other churches. With many of you I have been in times of darkness and sorrow. With your tears mine have fallen; with your prayers mine have ascended. The years have sobered but not saddened me; they have chastened, but they also have gladdened me. I am conscious of many and great failures; and I thank you for your patience, your kindness, your consideration. We have done something, but we have not attained; the mark of the prize is still before us.

We remember to-day what Bishop Simpson has said of Spain: "Spain once held both sides of the Mediterranean at the Straits of Gibraltar. So highly did she value her possessions that she stamped on her coin the

two pillars of Hercules (as the promontories of rock were called); and on a scroll thrown over these were the words *Ne plus ultra*—No more beyond. But one day a bold spirit sailed far beyond these pillars and found a new world of beauty. Then Spain, wisely convinced of ignorance, struck the word *Ne* from the coin and left *Plus ultra*—More beyond." That is our motto to-day. What have the next ten years in store for us? Who can tell? What changes in the city, in our location, in our homes, in our lives? The tongue that speaks may long ere that time be singing the song of Moses and the Lamb. Will any neglect the great salvation and be before that time where hope never comes? Remember that you and I must meet at the bar of God; preacher and people must stand face to face. When that hour comes I can say that, however weak the messenger, the message of the glorious Gospel has been declared. I can say in the presence of God that I have not shunned to declare all the counsel of God; I have entreated and warned. Oh for a new consecration to God to-day! Oh for the fire of holy zeal and love from God's throne! God grant that each of us in a city better than this, a city not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, may look back over all of life as we look back on these ten years and say, Blessed be the Lord, for His marvellous kindness which He hath shewed in bringing me to this city whose twelve gates are twelve pearls, whose streets are pure gold, and which needs no sun nor moon to shine in it, for the Lamb is the light thereof.

XIX.

THE PLACE TOO STRAIT.*

"The place is too strait for me: give place to me that I may dwell."—Isa. 49 : 20.

"Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations; spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes."—Isa. 54 : 2.

We hold to-day our last Sunday services in this house. With the meeting of to-morrow evening this will cease to be a house of worship. We would be unnatural, unchristian, indeed, if some elements of sorrow did not mingle with our prayers and praises to-day. Tender associations with the living, tender memories of the dead gather about this place of prayer. Here the last words have been spoken over our beloved dead before they were borne to the narrow house appointed for all living. Here young and joyous hearts have taken upon themselves the vows of holy matrimony. Here many have learned to walk in the narrow way which leads to the house of many mansions. Here your pastor was examined for ordination; here he knelt while the hands of the Presbytery were laid on his head, while earnest prayer ascended to God; here he first administered baptism, and here he first officiated at the table of the Lord. From this place streams of blessing have flowed

* Preached at the last Sunday morning service in the Calvary Church, Twenty-third Street, July 1st, 1883.

forth to all parts of our broad land, and to many lands beyond the seas. The old home has become dear to our hearts. Often have we left here our crushing burdens; often here have we caught new inspirations for life's trials and triumphs. This place has often been a Bethel to our souls—none other than the house of God and the very gate of heaven. Our sorrow is natural; it is not unholy.

There are considerations, however, which tend to lessen this natural grief, and which give us joy in our contemplated removal. I have chosen these two texts of Scripture for this morning because they both interpret God's providence in relation to us. The first: "The place is too strait for me: give place to me that I may dwell," declares the truth which we have by His providence been expressing to God. The second: "Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations; spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes," is the command which God, by providential circumstances, has been addressing to us for the past few years.

1. Let me say, then, in the first place, that our contemplated removal is in harmony with all our historical precedents. Three times before the place was too strait for us; three times before God said to our brethren, "Enlarge the place of thy tent . . . lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes." We are doing what our fathers did. We are illustrating their spirit. We are doing what they would do were they in our places to-day. We are following their example; their mantle has fallen upon us. Thirty years ago, with sanctified common sense, they seized the wider opportunities which God gave them on Twenty-third Street. To-day we seize the wider opportunity which God gives us on Fifty-seventh

Street. Did we not do this we would be unworthy sons of noble and now sainted sires. May our sons be governed by an equally wise and sanctified ambition!

A glance at our history will justify my remarks. This church is an offshoot from the old Stanton Street church —the mother of the Fifth Avenue church, Dr. Armitage's, as well aso f ours. For some reason that place had become too strait for some brethren; just why I do not know. Perhaps it is as well not to inquire too carefully. God was even then saying to them, "Enlarge the place of thy tent . . . lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes." The church had a feeble beginning. Few of the members of this day know how full of toil and trial that early history is. Various reasons led Rev. David Bellamy, the pastor of the Stanton Street church, to go out from that body. On Wednesday evening, November 25th, 1846, a number of members of that church met at 219 Wooster Street to take measures for organizing a new congregation. The night was stormy; only ten persons were present. Nothing was done except to name the time and place for another meeting. The time was Friday, November 27th, 1846, the place was No. 3 Third Street, now Grand. The number present at this meeting was only fourteen. They decided, however, to consider themselves a distinct congregation, and a committee was appointed to secure the Coliseum, No. 450 Broadway, as a place of meeting. It was also decided to invite Rev. David Bellamy, who had just resigned the pastorate of the Stanton Street church, to preach for the new body on the next Sunday. The Coliseum was secured and worship was held there, until lots were secured on Broadway, opposite the New York Hotel. God said, "Enlarge the place of thy tent."

The people did so. The lots were bought on favorable terms ; the owners were interested in the enterprise, and thus were glad to dispose of it in this way.

On Sunday evening, January 3d, 1847, an invitation was given to all who wished to form an independent Baptist church to remain. It was unanimously and heartily resolved to take immediate steps to form such an organization. Among the leading men at the time were W. D. Saulsbury, B. S. Squires, M. G. Lane, William E. Sibell, D. W. Manwaring, Henry Estwick, William Conklin, Abraham Fanning, and John Fanning. On Sunday evening, February 28th, 1847, this church was organized. Rev. Elisha Tucker, then pastor of the Oliver Street church, was in the chair. Rev. David Bellamy, acting pastor, presented a resolution by the adoption of which the people constituted themselves into an independent Baptist church by the name of the Hope Chapel Baptist Church of the city of New York. Thus this church was organized, thirty-six years ago last February. On April 22d, 1847, a council met in the First Baptist Church, Broome Street, to consider the propriety of recognizing the body as a regular Baptist church. On motion of the distinguished Dr. Cone the body was so recognized, Dr. Hodge, Rev. Mr. Dickenson, Rev. Elisha Tucker, and Rev. E. G. Somers taking part in the public services of recognition on the evening of the first Sabbath in May, 1847, in the Coliseum. One hundred and seven names were enrolled as constituent members of the church. Of this number but few "remain until this day."

Soon after this the church built and occupied the house on Broadway, known as the Hope Chapel, on the lots bought opposite the New York Hotel. Thus again God said : "Enlarge the place of thy tent." In the year

1852 the name was changed to the Broadway Baptist Church. In the year 1853 the three lots on Twenty-third Street where we meet to-day were bought, the lots on Broadway having been sold. Of this I shall speak a little later. In the mean time Rev. David Bellamy, who was called February 27th, 1847, resigned October 26th, 1849. The second pastor was Rev. John Dowling, D.D. He was called January 23d, 1850, and he resigned April 13th, 1852. On August 1st, 1852, Rev. A. D. Gillette, D.D., was called. We would scarcely think now of holding a meeting on August 1st to call a pastor. In those days the more modern idea of closing churches and doing no religious work for three months in the year had not suggested itself. We have made great progress since. It was during his pastorate that the lots on this street were bought. It was difficult then to induce the people to vote to come so far up-town. All recent events justify the wisdom of Dr. Gillette and the brethren who worked with him. These lots were bought for a little less than $18,000. We have just sold them for $225,000. It is matter for regret that our brethren did not buy a few more lots, although they found it sufficiently difficult to pay for those they did buy. On the first Sunday in January, 1854, worship was had in the basement of this house—twenty-nine years ago last January. On the first Sunday in May of the same year the upper part of the house was occupied for the first time. In September of the same year the name was changed to the Calvary Baptist Church. This was a time of high hopes and great struggles. Few of us to-day can appreciate the burden which a few brethren carried in those days. At times it seemed as if they must sink under the load. From their own means—which were not large—they gave again and again to pay church debts. Some-

times they had to raise money on their notes to meet interest and other claims. The ladies in various societies took their share. Pastor and people worked heroically. They were enlarging the curtain of their tent and lengthening their cords at great sacrifices. At length our terrible Civil War came. Many young men went into the army. Prayer-meetings were broken up ; there was not the heartiest sympathy between some of the older and some of the younger brethren. By heroic efforts, however, the current expenses were paid and the debt was considerably reduced. On December 22d, 1863, Dr. Gillette resigned. His pastorate of over eleven years was the crowning work of his useful life. Of him and of his work I wish to speak more particularly.

Dr. Gillette was the third pastor in order. With his coming new life and power were given to every sphere of church work. Soon after he came the name of Calvary Baptist Church was adopted. Soon the congregations overflowed Hope Chapel. The "up-town" idea was then as serious a matter of discussion as it has been in later days. The selection of the present site of the church on Twenty-third Street was due to his sagacity. Often has he told the pastor of the discussions of those days, of his own anxious searching for lots, of his choice of these, and of the efforts to secure them. With the aid of his brother-in-law, Mr. George W. A. Jenkins, and the co-operation of other leaders in the church, the lots were secured and the house erected. The number of members was comparatively small, their means were quite limited, their burdens heavy, and their achievements noble. In all these protracted struggles his patience, his tact, his practical judgment were everywhere felt, guiding and inspiring the entire work. It was a great day for him and the people when the new house on Twenty-third Street

was opened for worship. New families soon came in; social and financial strength was gained, and the hopes of years gradually matured into blessed results. Dr. Gillette was prominent in every good word and work. To this hour his work is appreciated heartily, his influence felt constantly, and his memory cherished tenderly. We loved during all his life-time to think and speak of him as "our senior pastor."

The clouds of battle darkened our national sky during the closing years of Dr. Gillette's ministry in the Calvary Church; but he was to go into still darker clouds at the nation's capital. In 1864 he became the pastor of the First Baptist Church in Washington, D. C. During the later years of the war, and the years immediately succeeding, Washington was the centre of tremendous activities and seriously conflicting opinions. Into this stormy sea Dr. Gillette by his knowledge and sympathy was necessarily plunged. With President Lincoln, Edwin M. Stanton, and other men at the centres of power, he maintained intimate personal relations. His counsels were often sought in the critical junctures of our nation's life. Following the fight with Early at Fort Stevens, when he came before Washington, Dr. Gillette found work in going from hospital to hospital, and from camp to camp among the wounded. He was often employed as chaplain of the Houses of Congress and of the Government Hospital for the Insane. Then came the fearful days connected with the assassination of President Lincoln. At the urgent request of President Johnson and Secretary Stanton, Dr. Gillette spent most of the time during the last few days of their lives with the conspirators who murdered President Lincoln; following out this same request he officiated as chaplain at their execution. The case of Paine especially interested him; for his father's sake and

his own soul's sake the good doctor gave him unremitting attention.

The excitements of those awful days told upon his health. In December, 1868, he broke down utterly before the close of a morning service. By the advice of his physicians he went abroad. While in London he enjoyed the intimate friendship of Mr. Spurgeon, Hon. and Rev. Baptist Noel, and other distinguished Baptists. Baptist Noel preceded him into the land of perpetual fellowship. The rest and change brought back health and vigor. In the fall of 1870 he returned to America, and almost immediately he accepted the temporary charge of the Gethsemane Baptist Church, Brooklyn. He could not be idle; his whole soul was in the work of preaching; and in 1874 he became pastor of the Baptist church at Sing Sing. With all the enthusiasm of early manhood he took hold of the work. His influence was felt in all the interests of education and Christianity in the village. In 1878 he resigned. He then became stated supply of the church at North New York, a young church just across the Harlem River. His advancing years were bright and beautiful; he was walking on the sunny side of the cross. He was growing old sweetly and happily. He loved his work; his preaching instructed the people, and they in turn co-operated heartily with him.

After his return from England his membership, together with that of his estimable wife, was resumed with the Calvary church. Upon going to Sing Sing it was transferred to the church there. On their return to the city their letters were brought again to the old church. Never shall I forget the long and sunny visit had with the doctor at that time. He spoke of his love for the old church, his desire that he might have a home here until he went to his home above, and that when that

time came he might be buried from the spot he loved so well. All happened as he hoped. In May, 1880, the Baptist national societies were holding their anniversaries in Saratoga. Here he was stricken with apoplexy. All that filial affection and medical skill could do for him was done by his son, Dr. Walter R. Gillette, of this city. At Lake George, under the tender ministrations of his beloved wife, partial restoration came. The disease left the intellect intact, but the power to express ideas in appropriate words was gone never to return. The attacks returned regularly every month. He was, however, bright and cheerful; he still rejoiced in the sunshine of Christ's love; he still was interested in all the concernments of national and church life. But it was evident to near friends that the end was drawing near. On May 29th last a long-cherished wish was gratified; he was able to be present at the laying of the corner-stone of the new Calvary church on Fifty-seventh Street. On August 24th, 1882, he calmly fell asleep in his summer home on Lake George. The end was peace; the long warfare was over; the endless victory begun; the cross was laid down, and the soldier of Christ was crowned more than conqueror.

> "Mortals cried, a man is dead;
> Angels sang, a child is born."

As a pastor he was devoted to his duties. His great tact and attractive social qualities made him a welcome visitor in every home. At the bedside of the sick and in the house of mourning he was gentle in manner, wise in counsel, and fervent in spirit. This was a marked element of his power. Dr. Gillette's heart was always young. This characteristic gave him troops of friends among young and old outside of his own churches,

his own denomination, and the social circles in which he ordinarily moved. It is sometimes said that churches do not like old men. But churches always liked him; he was always full of the enthusiasm of youth, hope, and love. He was not old. To young ministers especially was he a cordial friend. There is no jealousy so sad as that which some men, who are growing old, show toward the younger brethren who are coming on the stage of action. This feeling has embittered the lives of many otherwise noble men. It has been "the last infirmity of noble minds." Dr. Gillette was too large-hearted for this miserable feeling. For twelve years my relations with him had been most intimate. Together we have stood by the dying and the dead and labored in many other ways. He always and everywhere has been the true friend, the genuine brother, and the perfect Christian gentleman. Stately in figure, refined in face, and courtly in manner, he was a man to be observed among a thousand. His strictly clerical garb was eminently adapted to the whole style of the man. His life, in every circle in which he moved, was a constant benediction, a testimony to the grace of God, and a model to the younger men in the ministry.

His wish to be buried from the old church was, in the providence of God, gratified. Dying at Lake George, Thursday, August 24th, he was buried from this church on Monday, August 28th. Drs. Samson, Burlingham, and Armitage, and Rev. Walter Scott made appropriate addresses; and Drs. Everts and Deems offered the prayers, and the pastor presided and read the lessons. On Sunday morning, September 3d, the pastor preached a memorial discourse in the presence of a large and sympathetic audience. It is fitting that these facts be rehearsed at this last Sunday morning service in the house which

he so largely helped to erect, and in the presence of so many whom he was instrumental in bringing into the kingdom of God. No words more appropriately express our tender memories of him and many others who once filled these pews than these from Dean Alford :

> " Oh, then, what raptured greetings
> On Canaan's happy shore !
> What knitting severed friendships up,
> Where partings are no more !
> Then eyes with joy shall sparkle,
> That brimmed with tears of late,
> Orphans no longer fatherless,
> Nor widows desolate."

Rev. R. J. W. Buckland, D.D., was the fourth pastor. He was called November 1st, 1864. He resigned September 24th, 1869, to become a professor in the Theological Seminary at Rochester. There he died. He was a man of varied learning and of noble character. During his pastorate the entire debt was paid. This grand result was accomplished by the wisdom and liberality of the late Dr. Nathan Bishop. He saw clearly that soon a pressure in the money market would come and if the debt were not now paid it might remain for years. Dr. Bishop believed also that the only way to pay a debt is to pay it. All helped according to their means, but his wisdom carried the effort through to success. But for this the present pastorate probably would not have been attempted. The present pastor was called February 25th, 1870, while yet a student in the Rochester Theological Seminary. He entered upon his work May 15th, 1870, having been graduated from the seminary three days before. Thus our present removal is in harmony with the spirit of the church as seen during these years. It is needless to speak of this pastorate ; we are not here to-day to give the history of these years, but these two facts ought to be given :

during these thirteen years the membership has gone up from two hundred and thirty-eight to over eleven hundred and about three-quarters of a million of dollars have been given to denominational and other forms of Christian benevolence.

Let me say, in the second place, that the dominant spirit of the church to-day is in harmony with these Scriptures. What is that dominant spirit? How may it be characterized? It has several elements.

It is a spirit of harmony—of unity. We do not go out of this house a divided body. A divided body seldom finds even a very strait place too strait for it. A divided church seldom hears God's providence saying, "Enlarge the place of thy tent." So far from being an aggressive body, a disunited church is a house divided against itself, and Christ tells us that such a house cannot stand. This church never has had a church quarrel; and that is something which we will not have. We do not go out of this house on a bare majority vote. There was only one vote in the negative when the final vote was taken, and the brother who cast it is now one of the warmest friends of the new enterprise. I would be a sad man to-day if there was even a small minority opposed to this movement. We go out a unit. We seek no personal honor, nor denominational glory. We go out to glorify God and to be of greater help to men. It is not given to any company of men and women with independence in thought and action to be more of a unit in any matter than we are in this. This church is a remarkable body in this respect. In all our deliberations no unkind word was ever spoken; the very peace of God has been granted us. The angel of peace has hovered over us. Christ's last legacy we have rejoiced in as our inheritance.

The spirit of this church is also evangelical. We

have no new Gospel to preach ; no other way of salvation to propose. The motto on our new house of worship is : "We preach Christ crucified." For thirteen years I have known nothing among you save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. By this sign we have won some victories. This old Gospel is triumphing over all modern errors. I have been fortunate, as I have intimated, in my predecessors. Rev. David Bellamy was an earnest and able preacher. Dr. Dowling secured a wider fame both as a preacher and a writer. Dr. Gillette possessed the gentleness of John and something of the power which made that apostle one of the sons of thunder. Dr. Buckland was a kindly man and a ripe scholar. He died all too soon for the cause of sacred learning. They have all gone to their reward. They were all loyal to Christ and His truth, and their work abides. May the day never come when this pulpit shall be disloyal to the glorious Gospel of the blessed God. Away with the nostrums of the devil ! The weary and the lost need Jesus Christ. This spirit makes us stretch out our tent ; this leads us to strengthen our stakes and lengthen our cords. The pastorates of all these excellent men, except that of Dr. Gillette, were too short to make much impression. Great changes also have come to our city. It is growing with wonderful rapidity. Men and women from all parts of the country are coming to New York. This city is a mighty reservoir. The church has shared in this growth. It is practically a new church to-day ; but it preserves the old faith which my predecessors preached and in which they triumphed over death.

Furthermore, this church is a missionary body ; it believes in aggressive work for Christ. Past victories will not suffice. Grander triumphs must be achieved.

We leave here for a larger field and a grander work. If we left to enter upon a more contracted sphere this would be a sad day for us all. That would be a crime against light and against the Lord. That would be a sin against the memory of our sainted dead ; that would be to trail the flag in the dust. Perish the thought ! Sir Charles Napier says : " A Christianity which is not aggressive is not Christianity." A church which is satisfied simply to strengthen what remains will soon be nothing but " remains." Often the best way to strengthen the things which remain is to attack the things which resist. I have said before that an anti-mission church is an anti-Christian church. For such a church God has no use, the devil no dread, and the world no respect. Such churches must die, and the sooner the better. But an honest minister standing beside the corpse could not say, " Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord." Forward, oh church of God ! Grasp the golden opportunities ! Enter the opening door ! God's own hand opens it. May He give us grace to see and to do our new duties and enjoy our great opportunities !

Now, in the third place, God's providence to-day says plainly to us, " The place is too strait for me ;" and that same Providence plainly adds, " Enlarge the place of thy tent." It is certain that the place is too strait. Our Sunday-school has overflowed into the main audience-room. Often the prayer-meetings crowd us. Too long have we met in a room below the level of the sidewalk ; too long have we breathed a poisonous atmosphere in this low, damp basement. Business has pressed upon us. Our property has become too valuable for the facilities which it affords. These facts are God's way of indicating His will.

Plainly, too, Providence indicated the new location.

Other doors were shut. God said, Go to Fifty-seventh Street, "Behold, I set before you an open door." My text tells us to enlarge the place of our tent; it says, *spare not;* be not parsimonious; make the necessary expenditure; welcome the new opportunity; grasp the grand chance to do great things for God and man. If ever a people were divinely led we have been in this matter. As truly as the pillar of cloud went before the children of Israel by day and the pillar of fire by night, so truly has God gone before us in this matter. Without His presence all is vain. Our language is that of Moses, "If Thy presence go not with us, carry us not up hence." God's answer is, "For the Lord will go before you, and the God of Israel will be your rereward."

Our place of work changes, but the church remains. The true church of God abides. If we have to cross the Red Sea God can pile up its waters in crystal walls on either side while we march through dry shod. Difficulties await us; but God will never leave nor forsake us. Forward, oh church of God! "Let us go up and possess the land," for with God on our side, we can say, "We are able."

XX.

REASONS FOR PUBLIC WORSHIP.*

"We will not forsake the house of our God."—NEH. 10 : 39.

THESE are the words of that manly man and princely patriot Nehemiah, and those who were associated with him. Four hundred and forty-five years B.C. we find Nehemiah in the royal palace at Shushan, the winter residence of the Persian king, occupying the important office of cup-bearer to Artaxerxes the king. Certain Jews who came from Jerusalem gave him an account of the mournful and desolate condition of the returned colony in Judea. He was deeply moved. His sad countenance revealed to the king his sorrow of heart. After three or four months of devout prayer and earnest purpose, he was appointed governor of Judea, furnished with a troop of cavalry and granted permission to repair thither. The king gave him full power to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem and "to seek the welfare of the children of Israel." He also received letters of safe escort to the governors beyond the Euphrates; and orders were given him on the keeper of the royal forests for the timber he might need. On his arrival he found the city almost deserted, and the temple in a state of decay. Ruin and desolation met him on every hand. He began at once a work of great importance—the rebuilding of the walls which had been destroyed by Nebuzaradan.

* Sermon preached at the opening of the Calvary Church Chapel, New York, Sunday morning, July 8th, 1883, by the pastor.

By word and deed he stirred up the people ; and notwithstanding the insidious and venomous opposition which was made from the first by Sanballat and Tobiah, who plotted against him and misrepresented him both to the people of Jerusalem and to the king of Persia, in an incredibly short space of time—"in fifty-and-two days" —the walls rose from the heaps of rubbish which had covered them, to the sublime proportions and great grandeur which had characterized them in the olden time. The wall was thus built in "troublous times." After many interruptions and some delay its completion was joyously celebrated by a day of solemn dedication. A census of the returned captives was taken, the law was publicly read, the feast of tabernacles was again observed ; the day of atonement was solemnly kept, when the people covenanted to observe the law of Moses, the sanctity of the Sabbath, and to keep themselves separate from surrounding heathen nations, and amid the solemnities of the hour, they with one voice and with the consent of all hearts, sublimely said in the words of my text, "And we will not forsake the house of our God."

Nehemiah and those with him acted wisely in thus pledging themselves, amid the cares of State and the business of the people, to remember the house of God. He was a man of the loftiest patriotism and the truest integrity. In the performance of duty he knew neither friend nor foe. The perils of his country and the sorrows of his countrymen drew him from his post of wealth and influence in the first court of the world. In his twelve years' governorship of Jerusalem he risked his life to help his country and to honor his God. His life is too little known even by intelligent Christians, and consequently his worth is too little appreciated. In everything he sought God's honor and blessing ; but in

nothing does his wisdom as a patriot, a statesman, and a man of God shine out more grandly than when he and his people exclaim : " We will not forsake the house of our God." I wish you would adopt that resolution as your own this morning. It should be a sufficient reason for us all to adopt and forever keep this resolution, that God has in many ways, both in the Old and in the New Testament, commanded us in the words on the wall before you, to keep His Sabbaths and reverence His sanctuary ; but this reason is not sufficient with all men. There are other reasons and advantages, therefore, which should induce us to say, " We will not forsake the house of our God."

THE SOCIAL ADVANTAGES.

1. The social advantages incident to association with Christian people.

Do not suppose that this reason is unworthy of mention here. So far from being unworthy of our thought and notice, we are assured that this consideration deserves more weight than religious teachers are in the habit of giving it. Let any man glance over his history, and take an inventory of the forces which have shaped his life, and he will acknowledge that his social relations have contributed largely to make him what he is, whether he be right or wrong. We have no sympathy whatever with that snobbery which is always seeking a prominent place in " society," as it is called. The desire to appear richer, more fashionable, wiser or better than we really are, is a most unpardonable species of false pretences. Were persons to spend in honest, earnest efforts to make themselves worthy of promotion, the energy spent in tricks to secure the desired prominence, they would secure it, and win the respect of all men besides. We have seen

too much of this false seeking for an entrance into fashionable society. Many ambitious fathers and mothers coming into a large city, and anxious for social positions for themselves and their sons and daughters, too often resort to means which compromise their self-respect and their religious principles. We have known such to turn their backs upon the church of their fathers—the church to which they are indebted for whatever they have for time and eternity, the church, moreover, of their religious convictions—and join themselves to a church which they supposed possessed a monopoly of social advantages and eligible opportunities for their sons and daughters. For such persons—and there are such Baptists floating about all cities—we have nothing but mingled pity and scorn. They, like all persons in God's world, will get, in the course of time, all that they are worth, and it is but little.

When we name as a reason for attendance on the services of God's house the social advantages incident to such attendance, we have no such practice in mind. There is, however, a proper ambition in regard to our social relations. No man can afford to despise the advantages of these relations. A wise man will not attempt to despise them, but he will put himself in line with them, and reap the profit they offer. We regard these remarks as a fair statement of the truth. We are now prepared for this further statement: The very best society—not the hollow-hearted, fashionable society—but the very best in the very best sense of that word, the society that has the promise of the life that now is, as well as that which is to come, is Christian society; and it is always represented among church-going people. I do not say that all who attend the house of God are of this high order; but I do say, that nearly all who are of

this high order attend the house of God. Here are found the kings and priests of God ; here the heirs of immortal life and glory. Here the best minds and hearts in all periods of the world's history have brought their treasures and laid them at the feet of Jesus ; here cultivated intellects and purified hearts may always be found, blessing the world, adorning the Church and honoring Christ. Is it not worth much to any man, to a young man especially, starting in life, to have entrance to the homes and hearts of such people ? Is it not worth much to name among your friends one who is the friend of God ? Is it not worth much to write among the names of your choicest friends one whose name is written in the Lamb's book of life ? Yes, let Christ's friends be my friends.

Directly and indirectly all a man's interests will be advanced by his association with Christian people in the services of the sanctuary. It is a fundamental law of association that we become assimilated in character to those with whom we associate. And Christian character is the best the world can produce ; such character is always sure eventually to win success in the race of life. Let a young man just commencing life in this great city cultivate, by his attendance at church and his acquaintance with Christian people, habits of sobriety, honesty, devotion to duty, and unswerving integrity, and he will find situations open for him, and high salaries offered him, while the reckless, dissipated young man, who spends his Sundays in open wickedness on the street, or in lazy indifference in his boarding-house, may be left in want, or be found begging a place to earn his bread. Illustrations of these facts are with me almost daily occurrences.

The direct effect, then, of the course I have indicated

is, by developing a worthy character, to advance even a man's worldly and financial concerns. The same is true indirectly. The acquaintances a man makes and the friendships he forms by such relations often open the way, by their influence over him and others, to prominence and wealth. A kind word spoken or letter written by an influential man in favor of a young man has often been the first round in the ladder of success. Shall a man, then, join a church because of the social, financial, and professional advantages of such a connection? There is but one answer to such a question—that answer a most emphatic No! Such a man would be a knave. Better, however, that a man should attend a church from such low motives than not attend at all. Better that he should bring his heart under the influence of truth, even though that heart were shielded in selfishness. The arrows of the Almighty might pierce through this covering, and the man be brought to the feet of Christ a lost sinner seeking forgiveness. God be thanked that all that is needed to fit a man for an honest, noble career in this life, as well as in the life to come, is not contrary to church-going and religion, but is directly fostered by both! Godliness is profitable in all things, having the promise of both worlds; and men, if they had no higher motive, should for the sake of their worldly and social interests be regular attendants at a stated place of worship, contributors to the support of the Church and Gospel, and should say, "We will not forsake the house of our God."

THE INTELLECTUAL ADVANTAGES.

2. We name, as a second reason, the intellectual advantages of attendance on the services of God's house.

No one who is ignorant of the Bible can, with justice,

claim the honors of a liberal education. The facts of history, the study of jurisprudence, the science of medicine, as well as the great truths of theology, are so connected with the Bible that no man who is ignorant of it can be fully versed in them. The historian who is ignorant of the Word of God has shut himself out from the most fruitful source of historical knowledge. No lawyer can afford to be ignorant of the laws of Moses; they are the foundation of all law. It is extremely doubtful whether medical science has reached in our day, in several important respects, the high-water mark of the Mosaic Code. A young physician of this city, a member of this church, is soon to read at the Baptist Autumnal Conference in Boston, a paper on the "Sanitary Provisions of the Mosaic Code." It will be an interesting paper on an important subject. Every intelligent physician must be master of this code. From it he will learn what human text-books cannot teach him.

We know that some people pride themselves in being ignorant of the Bible, but such people only advertise their intellectual and moral weakness. Now the Bible, in what is called "Gospel sermons," is the great text-book, and its exposition and enforcement are, in large part, the duty of the pulpit. Attendance, then, on the house of God is to be a means of learning God's will, as laid down in God's Word, for the quickening of the mind, as well as the purifying of the heart. We know that with some persons it is common to disparage the intellectual attainments of ministers. We know that it has been often said that men of the highest culture do not attend our churches. Ministers have sometimes been called "marrying and christening machines," and in churches where a prescribed formula forbids an independent exercise of mental power, and where mistaken

notions of a minister's duty transform him into a priest rather than a teacher—into a performer of ritualistic duties and traditions of men rather than an interpreter of God's Word—there is some ground for the charge. "As dull as a sermon" has passed into a proverb. But, judged simply from the number of persons who hear them, sermons are not dull. They are the most popular form of entertainment—if one may use that term. No man on any subject but religion could draw and hold the audiences which any representative minister in this city has every Sunday. The Bible is a popular book.

In the *North American Review* for July there is a "Symposium" on church attendance. The discussion is opened by one who calls himself a "Non-churchgoer." He is generally supposed to be Mr. James Parton. He claims that only a small proportion of intelligent and respectable people attend the services of the churches; that such attendance cramps the brains of those who go; that only intellectual "light-weights" enter the ministry. Three men of different schools of thought give their views on this first paper. The editor of the New York *Independent* has given the most satisfactory reply. He most conclusively shows how false are the statements that intelligent and moral people do not attend the churches. He proves from the census reports and year books of different denominations that "there were in 1800, according to the best available statistics, 350,000 Evangelical communicants in the country, being seven per cent of the population of 5,308,483. In 1850 there were 3,529,988 such communicants, being fifteen per cent of the population of 21,191,876. In 1870 there were 6,673,396 such communicants, being seventeen per cent of the population of 38,558,371. In 1880 the com-

municants had risen to 10,065,963, being a little over twenty per cent of the population of 50,152,866."

He also shows that the increase in population since 1800 has been ninefold; that in Evangelical communicants has been twenty-sevenfold, three times as great as the population. But we have as attendants on the services in our churches not only communicants, but many who are connected with them by family or social ties. He therefore estimates that thirty-six of the fifty millions of our population are recognized as regular attendants. He rightly admits that "there are men of French or Spanish birth who have learned to despise Romanism, and who in throwing it off have thrown off all faith. There are Germans by birth who have succumbed to a local tide of unbelief. There are Jews to whom Judaism seems a decayed religion, and who have accepted no other." We all know that the worst classes do not attend the church. Keepers and patrons of saloons do not. The reckless Sunday excursionists, who this very day are doing all they can to bring this city into disrepute, do not. Supporters of places too vile to be named do not. Those who neglect the house of God are in bad fellowship. I do not say that all who neglect public worship are of this low order; but I do say that nearly all who are of this low order neglect the house of God. So to do is to have fellowship with the worst classes in the community, fellowship with the devil and his angels. But these are only a small fraction of the great whole who in increasing proportions attend our places of worship. It is safe to say that nearly four-fifths of our population attend religious worship. The reply to the question, "Why do not the people attend the churches?" is, "The people do attend the churches." To deny this is to display unpardonable ignorance.

Of course, we do not claim the same prominence for the clergy now over all other classes of men, as was given them some centuries ago, when clergymen were the only educated men in the community—when the names scholar, clergy, and clerk were synonymous terms—as my honored and beloved college president, Dr. M. B. Anderson, whose presence here this morning is so pleasing to us all, used often to remind his students. Indeed, clerk is still the old English law-term for a preacher. But we do claim that a given number of clergymen, compared with an equal number of men in any other profession, in natural ability, specific attainments and general literary culture, will prove themselves at least their equals, and possibly their superiors. We are assured that attendance on God's house is calculated to stimulate a man's mental powers, by bringing him into contact with the great thoughts of the Almighty. A good sermon stirs all the hidden energies of the soul, by enforcing the claims of God and by revealing the great realities of eternity. The intellect, as well as the heart, was made for God; and whether in arguments for or objections against God's claims, all our mental powers are quickened. The Bible is the source whence poets, musicians, and painters have drawn their subjects and their inspiration.

The Bible gave all these men—working in different departments of genius—their inspiration. Shall we be so inconsistent as to rejoice in the streams while we despise the fountain whence they flowed? No literature has in it the elements of immortality except that which draws its inspiration from God's Word. This gave Tasso his strength in song and Michael Angelo his glory in art. The music of this world dies with the breath which gives it utterance. Only as literature,

music, poetry, sculpture and painting are linked with Him whose name is above every name, can they possess something of the enduringness of Him who is the King Immortal. They must at least embody the best religious thought of their time. This is true both of the Greek poems and plays.

The office which has been honored by the gifts of Paul and the graces of John, by the immortal names of heroes and martyrs in the past, and is filled now by some of the ablest and best men living, needs no further vindication from me. To a blind man only is it necessary to prove that the sun at noonday in midsummer gives light. Because of its intellectual advantages, then, we should to-day say: "We will not forsake the house of our God."

THE MORAL AND SPIRITUAL ADVANTAGES.

3. As a third and last reason, I name the moral and spiritual advantages for time and eternity connected with keeping the Sabbath and attending the house of God.

What a blessing is the Christian Sunday now, as was the Jewish Sabbath in ancient times! Happy is that land and blessed is that family where the Sabbath is kept holy, and God is loved and served! A week without Sunday is like a country without the smell of flowers or the song of birds. It is like a year without a summer, nothing but bleak, barren, frozen winter. It is like a night without a morning, nothing but sorrow, darkness, death. Sunday is the embankment which God has built, against which the waves of care and sorrow which for six long days have been rolling over the heads and hearts of anxious men and weary women, may break and scatter themselves in harmless spray and beautiful foam. Sunday is God's benediction on a troubled world. He

stretches out His mighty and loving hands over us, and the gentle benediction falls. He speaks the word of "Peace" and the noise of trade and strife ceases; the spindle rests in the loom, the grinding ceases in the mill, the store remains closed, and God's hush—making even silence vocal—alone is heard; and every heart is uplifted in holy song or bowed in humble prayer. Such is God's idea of Sunday, such should be ours.

A period of rest for man and beast is an unavoidable necessity. Even if God had made no positive law on this subject, the necessities of the case would compel the observance of periods of rest. Extensively also, among many heathen nations the seventh day, or the seventh part of the time, was given to rest. It was called a "holy day." The French nation during the Revolution, when they denied the existence of God and despised the Bible, were still obliged to observe a period of rest. They appointed the "Decade," taking for rest one day in ten.

To the laboring man Sunday is a boon and a benediction. Disraeli, in his "Tancred," well says: "The life and property of England are protected by the laws of Sinai. The hard-working people of England are secured a day of rest in every week by the laws of Sinai." Humboldt, who certainly was not a prejudiced witness, and who saw the working of the decimal system in France, says: "The selection of one day in seven is the wisest that can be made. When in the time of the Revolution I spent some time in Paris I saw the institution of the Sabbath, despite its divine origin, suspended by the dry and decimal system. But this was decidedly too long. I am convinced that six days is the just measure. To lengthen the interval is as inhuman as it is foolish." It has been abundantly proved by many actual tests that

men and beasts will accomplish more work in a year by obeying God in observing the Sabbath; and many men are now in lunatic asylums just because they disobeyed God by working on that day; failing to give their brain the rest it needed, they brought upon themselves inevitable punishment. No class of men are more interested in this subject than the laboring classes, so-called, and yet no class has shown greater blindness than the Sabbath-breakers among them to their own best interests. They are their own worst enemies. In breaking God's law of the Sabbath they are also breaking His law of health in their own bodies. They are not reaping the benefit which this day of rest is designed to give them. Our hearts ache for their folly and mourn over their crime.

Many persons are benefited in large measure by church-going who are not benefited in the fullest measure possible. They are profited in their outward life and in the morals of the community. This is itself a great gain. Clean linen and one's best clothes are a means of grace. One is descending in the scale of humanity, he is getting further from the angelic end and nearer the devilish, who does not care enough for Sunday to fix up himself and his family on that day. He is the enemy of the Republic, he is the foe of humanity, who lifts hand or voice against God's Sabbath. Is there honesty anywhere? Is there any man whom we may trust? We bow our heads in shame; we hide our faces in confusion; we pray God be merciful, and not make us as Sodom. But would not things be worse were it not for the restraining influences of Sabbaths and sanctuaries? We may now say, as Franklin said of his times: "If men are so bad with religion, what would they be without it?"

Every business man knows that the morals inculcated in our churches tend greatly to restrain wickedness and foster righteousness. Close all our churches to-day forever; let our ministers abandon the city, and real estate would not be worth much one year hence. Old Dr. South spoke the truth when he said: "If there was not a minister in every parish, you would quickly find cause to increase the number of constables; if the churches were not employed to be places to hear God's law, there would be need of them to be prisons for the breakers of the laws of men." This church increases the value of every inch of real estate in this vicinity. I would not apologize to any property-holder when I ask him for aid in supporting a church. It is the best police force. Looking at this whole subject from even the point of a moralist, so-called, there is great reason for observing the command of God, on this wall before you, "Ye shall keep My Sabbaths, and reverence My sanctuary." The higher religious motive makes the obligation more binding. Here is the culminating point of all we have said. The will of God may be learned and the salvation of God found anywhere; but in His house, and in the preaching and hearing of His Word, we may come more immediately into His presence.

We sometimes hear persons excuse themselves from the house of God on the ground that they can read a good sermon at home. As a rule, a sermon is the very last thing which such persons will read at home or elsewhere. But granting that they are perfectly honest, it would be better to hear the sermon. Even a poor sermon, when set on fire by the love of God in the heart of the preacher, may become a tremendous power. A sermon needs a man behind it—a living, loving man—who is himself the incarnation of the truths he utters.

The man is more than the preacher—certainly more than the sermon. A single sermon by an obscure and unknown man, who preached for the famous Edmund Calamy, was the means of the conversion of John Owen, who for five years was in deep despondency, and for three months scarcely spoke to any one. The text was, "Why are ye so fearful, oh ye of little faith?" The sermon was balm to the bruised heart; it proved to be his physical, mental, and moral cure. Among the pupils of John Owen were John Locke and William Penn; his readers are almost all the English-speaking people; eternity alone will reveal his work. A single sermon by Livingston resulted in the conversion of at least five hundred, and originated a movement which extended through the west of Scotland and the north of Ireland, and thousands felt its influences.

In an obscure corner of a humble chapel there sat, one Sunday morning, a young man burdened with a sense of sin. His heart was longing for rest and peace. The preacher rose in the pulpit. He was a feeble old man, a primitive Methodist, I believe. He was not learned, not eloquent, not famous. With a trembling voice he announced his text: "Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else." He exalted Christ as the sinner's only refuge. As Moses lifted up the serpent, so he displayed Christ. The congregation was small. The eyes of the preacher seemed to rest upon the young man. Raising his voice he shouted, "Young man, look, look now!" It was the birth-moment of the new life. The young man looked and lived. With the look of faith came life. The burden fell from his heart. Joy filled his soul. He left the house justified. The humble preacher knew not, but God did, what glorious work was done

that morning. That young man is known throughout the entire world as the greatest preacher since Paul's translation. His name—need I say it?—is Charles H. Spurgeon.

It is true God might have done these great things, if these ministers had not preached and their hearers had not attended the house of God. But God works by means, and we dare not separate the results which in His sovereign pleasure He ordains from the means which, in his sovereign pleasure, He appoints. Humanly speaking, their salvation depended on their attendance on the worship of God in His holy temple. Preaching is God's chosen instrument to lead men to Himself. The printed page has its use, but the living voice of the living preacher is the divine method. When the Holy Ghost came in mighty power on the day of Pentecost, He rested as a tongue over the heads of the disciples. The symbol is significant. Let us follow God's plan. The pulpit was never a mightier force than it is to-day. An uplifted Christ still draws men unto Himself.

OUR OPENING.

It is to many a matter of regret that the opening services occur while so many of our warmest friends are away. I cannot, however, but believe that this, too, is wisely ordered of God. For thirteen years I have striven by voice and pen to oppose the too common habit in our city of closing the churches in summer. We might as well close in January as in July. God has owned our work in summer's heat as in winter's cold. It seems fitting that this forward movement, this aggressive step, should be taken now in midsummer. God has honored our faith; he has rewarded our summer work. While

so many churches are closed and religious work interrupted, if not suspended, we are permitted to take possession of this new field for Christ.

Standing to-day on the border-line between the old home on Twenty-third Street and the yet incomplete home on Fifty-seventh Street, we look tenderly and gratefully backward; we look joyously and prayerfully forward. To many the old home was often the very gate of heaven. There many of you found Christ; there many of you left heavy burdens; there many found inspiration for the trials of life; there the last words were spoken over your beloved dead. Tender memories both of the living and the dead gather about the dear old home. Workmen may tear it down; soon as a church it will be no more; but it has made an imperishable history. In letters of living light the recording angel has written its story before the throne of God. Farewell to the old home! Welcome to the new! May this church be anointed to preach the Gospel to the poor, to heal the broken-hearted, and to preach the acceptable year of the Lord! Here we shall ever have a welcome for the stranger. Here we shall ever hold ourselves your servants for "Jesus' sake." Here in the presence of God and His peoples we shall declare with pious and patriotic Nehemiah—"We will not forsake the house of our God."

XXI.

VOICEFUL STONES.*

"What mean ye by these stones?"—Josh. 4 : 6.

The long and weary wilderness journey was over. Moses, the leader and lawgiver of Israel, had now gone up to glory and God. His mantle had fallen upon the son of Nun, the brave and noble Joshua. The task assigned him was great; the divine promises given him were greater. God said to Joshua: "Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed; for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest." He also added: "There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life; as I was with Moses so will I be with thee; I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee." These are great and precious promises. Joshua caught their inspiration. He had shown a spirit of trustful bravery, when forty years before he exhorted the people to go up against the land. In that spirit he now assumed command of the hosts of God. Forward went the priests of the Lord bearing the ark of the Lord. Their feet are dipped in the brim of the Jordan, and lo! the bed of the river is dried up. The rushing tide of waters, in this time of harvest, "rose up upon a heap very far from the city Adam, that is beside Zaretan;" while the waters below were carried on to the Dead Sea. Forward went the priests

* Preached at the opening of the new Calvary Baptist Church, Sunday morning, December 23d, 1883.

with the ark into the middle of the river. There they stood until the people "dry-shod passed over right against Jericho."

At the command of God, through Joshua, twelve men out of the people, out of every tribe a man, took twelve stones out of the Jordan, from the place where the priests' feet stood firm. These stones Joshua set up "for a memorial unto the children of Israel forever." Much ingenuity has been exercised in explaining this narrative. We do not stop to discuss the many questions it suggests. This primitive form of a memorial is common to almost all nations. Of this character are the Egyptian obelisks and the cairns and Druidical circles in England and Scotland. The text is the question of the children. The sight of the cairn would awaken curiosity. It has been well asked, "What child in Altorf but must have inquired respecting the statue of William Tell, or in Lucerne, about the lion sculptured by Thorwaldsen to commemorate the deaths of the Swiss Guard?" Crossing the Jordan dry-shod was the great miracle of the entrance into Canaan. The memorial stones would remind the tribes of God's greatness and goodness. But the stones must have tongues in order that their testimony may be more complete. They were not simply to be memorial; they were also to be declaratory. The living voice was to accompany the stony witnesses. Each stone is a preacher, but the voice of living preachers is added. Parents were to tell their children how they had come over Jordan on dry land. It is believed that the cairn remained at least until some centuries after the destruction of Jerusalem. But the instruction of parents as presented here gives the event a more enduring memorial.

Without departing from the original significance of

these monumental stones, we find in them to-day not really new lessons, but a new application of the old lesson. Occupying to-day for the first time this house of worship, it is fitting that we ask and answer the old question, "What mean ye by these stones?" The form which the stones have taken partly answers the question. Turret, tower, and spire point heavenward. They declare in their eloquent silence that there is a life beyond this; that it is not all of life to live; that we are the heirs of an immortal life. In its symmetry and sincerity the whole structure preaches the need of truth in the heart and life. This is a "sincere" building. Contradiction between seeming and being is bad always and everywhere; in the house of God it is abominable. The attempt to deceive by false pillars, arches, and recesses is bad both in art and religion. If any building in the world should be true it is a house dedicated to the worship of God. But, furthermore, in letters of stone over the central entrance these stones declare their mission: "We preach Christ crucified." Let us not belie their testimony; and let us add the testimony of the living voice to the "testimony of the rocks." Let us tell our children, and may they tell their children from generation to generation, what we mean by these stones. Better that they had never left their native quarries than that they should preach another gospel, which is not a gospel, than the Gospel of Christ, as the only hope of a lost world.

1. These stones, in the first place, express our conviction of the world's need of Christ's Gospel. Sin is the terrible fact in human existence. No true thinker on moral problems will shut his eyes to this sad human experience. The man who fails to see that the removal of sin is the world's great need is not a thinker; he is sim-

ply a shallow empiric. He has not discovered the world's great malady. He is simply playing at philosopher and humanitarian. Christ proved Himself to be an exhaustive analyst of character and life when He summed up His diagnosis of Man's moral condition by describing it as "that which was lost." He gloriously set forth His own mission when He said that He came "to seek and to save." Not the well, but the sick need a physician; not the saved, but the lost need a Saviour. The race is sick and lost; Christ is the Physician and the Saviour.

But we know that it is extremely difficult, often quite impossible, to get men to see the sinfulness of sin against God. The strong statements of the Bible shock and annoy them. The sad condition of men they attribute to some other cause. The nature of the world's disease they misunderstand because they examine it with diseased eyes. They are themselves the subject of the corruption on which they attempt to pronounce judgment. Their judgment, therefore, becomes manifestly incorrect. Satan often comes arrayed as an angel of light; he may thus deceive the very elect. Sin, like Jezebel, paints its face and tires its head. Man's inability to see the deceitfulness of sin is one of the fruits of the deceitfulness of sin. It takes from us the capacity to understand its true character. It robs men of spiritual health and yet cheats them with the hectic flush; it beggars them and yet tells them that they are increased in goods. It soothes while it stabs; it stabs while it soothes. It is useless to trifle. The evil remains. It will not "down" at the philanthropic philosopher's bidding. The enactments of legislatures will not remove it. We cannot refine it out of the world by giving it complimentary definitions. What is cold? Nothing, some say, but absence of heat. It is nothing in itself; it has no posi-

tive character ; it is only a negation. This definition is soothing to the philosopher by his warm fire. But the poor man out yonder is shivering, freezing, dying in the biting, bitter cold. What matters it that it is only absence of heat ; the man will soon be dead. Of course darkness is nothing ; it is only the absence of light. This surely is plain enough. Nevertheless men will stumble in it notwithstanding the mitigating definition. So the light-hearted teacher tells us that sin is but little ; it is only the absence of holiness. But even that is much. It is the absence of wholeness ; it is the absence of happiness ; it is the absence of Godlikeness here ; it is the absence of heaven hereafter.

But sin is more. It has separated man from God ; it has separated man from man. Sin is the prolific parent of all our woes. It is the terrible thing which God hates. It has a positive character ; it is earthly, sensual, devilish. The world has felt its polluting touch ; its trail is over all the products of human imagination, reason and affection. The world all about us illustrates and emphasizes the teachings of Scripture. Experience and observation, as certainly as the Scriptures, say, "There is none righteous, no, not one." They corroborate Paul's first chapter in the letter to the Romans. No wonder that some heathen of our day who first heard it charged the missionary who was familiar with their lives with having written it. In the fulness of time the Christ was born. One element, the negative element, in that fulness was the world's fruitless effort to help itself. Rome was mistress of the world. More than one hundred millions of people lay bleeding at her feet. She stamped her foot and mighty armies leaped to obey her call. Their tread shook the earth. But she was powerless to drive out the awful corruptions which were

eating out all that was noble in her life. All authorities agree with Tacitus and Juvenal in their fearful descriptions of the corruptions which permeated all ranks of society. The Emperor was a god ; the individual was a slave. The Pantheon, as has been said, was only the monument of an early and amusing superstition. Faith was dead ; hope was dying ; Rome was broken at heart. The highest art and culture of Greece could only build an altar on Mars' Hill "to the unknown God," and then fall down in helpless worship. Mighty Rome in her abject helplessness was calling for a deliverer. Beautiful Greece was stretching out her hands for a healer. Christ was both to both so far as they received Him. The experience of the world must be that of each individual. The world to-day is sick, helpless, sinful. Apart from Christ's Gospel it can find no help. "It lieth in the arms of the wicked one." God says, and experience echoes the saying, "Thou hast destroyed thyself." Thank God He speaks this other word : "But in Me is thy help."

2. Again, these stones express our faith in Christ's Gospel to meet the world's need.

The Gospel proclaims the divine specific for sin. It comes to the world at its lowest and darkest point with help and hope. To each man guilty and condemned it offers, through the death and mediation of Jesus Christ, a full and free pardon. Throwing aside all distinctions of condition and culture it regards us all as "concluded under sin." When we repent of and forsake our sins it assures us that God will abundantly pardon. The condition of pardon shows alike the matchless love and peerless wisdom of God. "How shall man be just with God ?" is the question of the ages. No man, no angel could answer it. God solves the problem. The cross is

the answer. There righteousness and truth met together, there mercy and peace have kissed each other. God can now be just and the Justifier of him who believes in Jesus. If the Gospel cannot save a man, nothing can. It is still the world's hope. No wonder that it made such rapid triumphs when first it was preached. It found the world weary with its sins, its philosophies, and its idolatries. Thoughtful souls were longing for help here and hope hereafter. The Gospel came as bread to the hungry, light to those groping in the dark, and life to the dying. It was a ray of supernal splendor in a world of earthly blackness. It revealed God as a loving Father and Saviour, and heaven as an eternal home. We can scarcely estimate the blessedness of this heavenly boon. It broke the power and removed the condemnation of sin. It showed how Christ had borne it in His own body, and how by His stripes we are healed. It also made the attainment of a holy character a possibility. It does so still. It makes the redeemed here have foretastes of heaven.

The Gospel is the harmonizer of all the conflicting interests of human society. It alone can elevate the "masses;" it alone can reclaim the fallen. Dr. Alexander MacLeod, in his "Christus Consolator," says that "When Orsted first exhibited to Frederika Bremer the beautiful and now familiar experiment of sand-grains upon a glass plate arranging themselves, under the influence of a musical note, in symmetrical and harmonious figures, this reflection passed through the mind of the lady: 'A human hand made the stroke that produced the note. But when the stroke is made by the hand of the Almighty, will not the note then produced bring into exquisitely harmonious form those sand-grains which are human beings, communities, nations. It will arrange

the world in beauty, and there shall be no discord, and no lamentation any more.'" This woman is right. That divinely musical note is the preaching of the glorious Gospel of Christ. Christ was a workingman; His apostles were workingmen. The laborer finds in Christ his truest friend. All that is true in communism is the offspring of Christ's religion; all that is evil is opposed by that Gospel. His religion is the cure for all the evils existing between employer and employed. Put Christ into the hearts of both and injustice, oppression, and strikes will be impossible. No form of slavery can exist in an atmosphere warmed by the love of Christ. In that warmth the chains of slavery melt. Could Philemon look on Onesimus as a chattel when the love of Christ was in the hearts of both? Impossible! The old bond might for a time exist. Paul recognized its claim. But Onesimus and his master Philemon were now brethren in Christ. Onesimus must go back, but now as a brother to a brother. This spirit has destroyed slavery wherever it has been destroyed. Tell me what good thing all the centuries have produced whose origin is not in this blessed Gospel? Religion now, as in all the past, lifts nations and races out of barbarism into civilization, out of sin into holiness, from earth to heaven. Think of the ignorance in which the Wesleys found the common people of England! Who can estimate their power for good? So-called reformers and humanitarians who are infidel to Christ and His Gospel, are the enemies of the poor, the enemies of the Republic, the enemies of the race. Those who would lift their hand against the Bible, against the Sabbath, against Christ, are the enemies of the best interests of all classes for time and eternity.

By means of the poor Christ's kingdom was first organized. The poor knew Him to be their true Friend. To

them there was music in His voice, there was sympathy in His heart, there was help in His hand. If we are to help the poor we must put Christ into their poverty. Religion would vastly reduce the number of the poor. It is the friend of industry and all kindred virtues ; it is the foe of intemperance and all kindred vices. The poor do not so much need bread as the character and the opportunity to earn bread. Religion in the heart gives both. Much is said about carrying the loaf with the tract. This idea has been overworked. It is instructive to remember that only twice did Christ use divine power to give bread to the multitude ; and in both cases the circumstances were peculiar. The poor need the religion of Christ more than bread except for immediate necessities. He is the true Bread. Give them that and the other bread will come. Christ gave Himself. He offers Himself still. There were as many evils, as Dr. MacLeod suggests, in Christ's day as now. There were then the lapsed classes, the dwellers in lanes, the victims of sin and misery of every kind. What was Christ's cure? Evangelize them. Did He blunder? Was He lacking in gentleness and love? Perish the thought! He was the true Reformer, the Divine Humanitarian, the Spiritual Regenerator of the individual and the race.

There is profound philosophy in His method. His spirit teaches the rich and the poor alike to recognize the poor man's manhood. This is a recognition of tremendous power. It gives hope, light, life to the poor. It lets into the poorest home and the saddest heart a flash of the glory of the millennial dawn. It gives those who are up tenderness for those who are down ; it gives those who are down trustfulness toward those who are up. The preacher of the Gospel is the poor man's best earthly friend. He tells of a Christ who was poor, and who has

sanctified and forever glorified poverty. Christ's incarnation has lifted the world into the sunshine of hope and the promise of heaven. It has levelled society by lifting the down-trodden—levelled it up. It makes lowliness loftiness, meekness mightiness, and gentleness greatness. Guizot says that "Christianity has carried repentance even into the souls of nations. Pagan antiquity knew nothing of these awakenings of the public conscience. Tacitus could only deplore the decay of the ancient rites of Rome, and Marcus Aurelius could only wrap himself sorrowfully up in the stoical isolation of the sage; there is nothing to show that these superior minds so much as suspected the great crimes of their social state, even in its best days, or aspired to reform them." The world's hope in every relation of life is in this old Gospel. It must have its place in every heart; it must throw its radiance over every home; it must be in every workshop and counting-house. Then will be realized the dream of the eloquent and tuneful Macaulay, in his "Lays of Ancient Rome:"

> "Then none was for a party;
> Then all were for the state;
> Then the great man helped the poor,
> And the poor man loved the great:
> Then lands were fairly portioned;
> Then spoils were fairly sold:
> The Romans were like brothers
> In the brave days of old."

This church stands for this idea. It is not the church of the rich; it is not the church of the poor; it is neither; it is both. The spirit of the world divides society horizontally—each class selecting its corresponding layer. The spirit of Christ's religion divides society vertically, cutting through all the layers. True religion says, whether a man be black or white, red or yellow,

dence. We have too often turned aside to debate with unbelievers. We have dignified contemptible foes. We have magnified pigmies into heroes, dwarfs into giants. We have given the devil too much respect; we owe him only disobedience, contempt, and hate. On, on, oh Church of God! Forward on thy divine mission, until the kingdoms of this world lie in joyous submission at Jesus' feet! These stones stand for this spirit. We believe in aggressive work. We are not to satisfy ourselves by singing, "Hold the fort." We must shout, "Storm the fort." An anti-mission church is an anti-Christian church. Such a church must soon die; the sooner the better. I charge you, my beloved Church, that you never forget your exalted mission. If you live only for yourselves you shall die. Your grandest liturgy is in following your Master, "who went about doing good." Visit the fatherless; carry the bread of life to the poor and sinful; begin in your Jerusalem; go on to all Judea; march into Samaria; forward to the uttermost parts of the earth. Fail and you die. Selfishness is death; self-abnegation, consecration, Christliness—these are life, power, and glory. These stones to coming generations shall bear testimony to the missionary spirit of this Church and of Christ's Gospel. At this blessed Christmas-tide we sing again the sweet angelic song which floated out on the midnight air when the Christ was born: "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will to men."

4. But, lastly, these stones declare our faith in our distinctive organic order as a body of Christians, as being in harmony with Christ's Gospel.

If our views be not in harmony with Christ's Gospel we do not wish to hold them; we have no other reason

for being Baptists. But so long as this reason exists we cannot be other than Baptists. We hold, in harmony with all the evangelical denominations, the great fundamental doctrines of the Gospel. We also hold views taught in the Word of God which, in our view, they lightly esteem or entirely ignore. These views are sufficiently well understood ; they need not be here specified. We would not multiply or magnify the differences between us and our esteemed brethren. We would rather lessen the number. But this we cannot do by denying or ignoring these differences. We must acknowledge them in a manly way and in a Christly spirit. We grant to others the liberty we claim for ourselves. We give them credit for the sincerity which we claim for ourselves. The Church almost as a whole has in a wonderful way come to accept views which once we almost alone held. It is worse than useless in union and other meetings to ignore points of difference. If men are honest in their denominational positions, there are differences and they are worthy of respect. We shall admit them ; we shall respect them ; we shall work with all who love Christ ; and we shall respectfully, kindly, Christianly differ from them in so far as we honestly believe that they differ from the teachings of Christ. This is Protestant, this is Baptist, this is Scripture doctrine. Here kindly, firmly, lovingly we stand. We "can do no otherwise." For myself, should I cease to hold the views touching the inspiration of the Scriptures, the vicarious atonement of Christ and other doctrines of evangelical Christianity, I should give up my Christian name. When I step off the platform touching baptism, the Lord's Supper, and any distinctively Baptist views, on which I stood when I received ordination as a Baptist minister, I shall give up my denominational name as a

Baptist minister. I shall relieve the denomination of all responsibility for my acts. Common honesty requires that when a minister has abandoned the views on profession of which he received denominational recognition, he should no longer enjoy the emoluments and honors of that denomination. How a man can wear his Church's armor while he is stabbing her to the heart is more than an honest man can understand. The maligned politician is above such unmanliness. I must say that as the years advance, I hold my ordination vows with a firmer grasp and a tenderer love. I believe in every drop of blood in the old, the blessed Book, in the old Gospel and in the old methods of winning men to God. The Gospel has lost none of its ancient power. It is still the power of God unto salvation. The churches in whose pulpits it is most faithfully preached are the churches whose pews are best filled with consecrated men and women. This Church stands for honesty in the pulpit, loyalty to ordination vows, and submission to the lordship of Jesus Christ.

It must also stand for loyalty in the pews. If the Church—the spiritual body—gives up the old Baptist faith, it ought to give up this house. These stones mean all this. Perhaps in the years to come the words I now speak may be quoted. Let them give no uncertain sound; these stones stand for a regular Baptist Church. This means much; but the stones mean even more. No Baptist Church is worthy the name, it is not a regular Baptist Church, except Christ be exalted above all other names. When Ptolemy built the Pharos he desired to perpetuate his name. But the architect cut the king's name in plaster; he cut his own, Sostratus, in imperishable granite. The waves washed off the plaster; the king's name disappeared; then the name

Sostratus was revealed. When all earthly names have perished Christ's will endure. Baptism does not make a Baptist Church. Some bodies baptize whom we utterly repudiate. A Baptist Church is loyal to the Word of God; it accepts the great doctrines of Christ's Gospel. When it gives up these it is unworthy its name. So, conspicuous above all other names you read in letters of stone on the front of this building: "We preach Christ crucified." Paralyzed be the hand which would tear down Christ's cross, or strike the crown from His brow! To-day we honor Him. These stones mean Jesus Christ, Prophet, Priest, and King, from deep foundation to lofty spire. We gather to-day about His cradle; we stand in awe and love at His cross; we gaze in fondest hope upon His throne. We have a better house than tabernacles made with hands—a house not made with hands. Our watchword in life, our support in death, and our song in heaven will be "Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." This we mean by these stones. Their purpose is that of Joshua's memorial: "That all the people of the earth might know the hand of the Lord, that it is mighty; that ye might fear the Lord your God forever." Even so, grant, Thou crucified and glorified Jesus Christ!

XXII.

THREE PREREQUISITES TO EFFECTIVE CHURCH LIFE AND WORK.*

"Now therefore arise, O Lord God, into Thy resting-place, Thou, and the ark of Thy strength: let Thy priests, O Lord God, be clothed with salvation, and let Thy saints rejoice in goodness."—2 CHRON. 6: 41.

THESE words form a part of Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple. Never was a king more royally engaged than was he when he spread forth his hands toward heaven as he "Kneeled down upon his knees before all the congregation of Israel." It was a great day. The tribes of Israel came in solemn and joyous bands. The entire prayer of Solomon—as recorded here and in 1st Kings, eighth chapter—is a wonderful one. It is a model, in many more respects than its brevity, for all who lead the devotions of God's people. It will well repay careful study. It was well that he prayed for rain in time of drought, for peace in time of war, for health in time of sickness. But the climax is reached in the text; this is the crowning glory of the prayer and of the consecrated house. Solomon realized that without the presence of the ever-living God all else was vain. Hence this great petition: "Now therefore arise, O Lord God, into Thy resting-place, Thou, and the ark of Thy strength: let Thy priests, O Lord God, be clothed with salvation,

* Preached at the dedication of Calvary Church, February 3d, 1884, the dedication having been postponed until provision was made for the debt.

and let Thy saints rejoice in goodness." The text gives us three prerequisites to effective church life and work.

THE FIRST PREREQUISITE.

1. The first is the presence of God in the midst of His people. During the unsettled condition of Israel the symbol of God's presence was migratory. Now God was to have a fixed dwelling-place. Though the heaven of heavens could not contain Him, still He graciously condescended to make the temple His special residence. There is need still of the presence of God in His Church. A church without the life-giving presence of God is like a summer without the smell of flowers or the song of birds; it is like a year without a summer; it is like a night without a morning, nothing but dampness, darkness, death.

The Old Testament abounds with illustrations of God's willingness to abide with His people. Look at Jacob on his stony pillow. Night gathers about Him. He is weary; he is sinful; he is sad. He sleeps; he dreams. The rough stones form themselves in the visions of the night into a vast stairway. The messengers of God ascend and descend on this heavenly ladder. God speaks to the houseless wanderer. The place becomes a Bethel —the very gate of heaven. Listen: "Behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest." Now Jacob's lonely path is peopled with an innumerable host. Now his fears are removed, and his future assured. Now the land of exile shall be a home. If God be for him, who can be against him? Behold Joshua fearing before the task laid upon him. Who may be the successor of Moses? What hands shall take up the burden which he has laid down? Jehovah

speaks: "Be strong and of a good courage; as I was with Moses, so shall I be with thee; I will not fail thee nor forsake thee. There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life." These are wonderful words. Any man can do marvels when God gives him such promises as these. Who but a child of God ever went into the battle of life with such assurances? See Solomon overwhelmed with his great responsibility. To take great David's place was a high honor; it was also a solemn responsibility. But God said: "I will be with thee and build thee a sure house." God kept His promise. The day of dedication was the proof. His glory filled the house. The abiding presence of Christ was the richest legacy which He left His Church. It was the hope of Paul and Silas when they made the old jail at Philippi vocal with their songs of praise to God. It cheered Paul when on his way to Rome while the tempestuous Euroclydon swept over the deep. The presence of God has illumined the dungeon with the glory of heaven; it has made the stake a throne of more than imperial power. Think of the glorious army of martyrs—the Latimers, the Hoopers, the Ridleys! Think of those who went on weary feet through the glens or climbed the hills of Scotland—Donald Cargill, Richard Cameron, James Renwick, and others! From the horrors of the Grass Market noble souls went up to glory and to God. Every land has had its martyrs for Jesus. Every land has had its baptism of blood. Think of our Baptist brethren who have suffered even in America for the truth—Obadiah Holmes, John Clark, John Crandall, and others! Patrick Henry's speech for persecuted Baptists is historical. He rode sixty miles to attend the court. The presence of God transformed trial into triumph and death into an immortal life.

The Church needs the living God to-day. O arm of God, awake, awake! Bow down Thine ear, Thou God of Abraham, Solomon, and Paul! Let the earth be filled with Thy glory! We read that, "When Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt-offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the Lord filled the house." May this be true of this house to-day. There is nothing too good for God's house and service. Christ ought to have the best of everything. Could we have churches which might surpass the majesty and splendor of Greek and Roman architecture in its palmiest days; could we have the most gorgeous decorations which lofty genius ever designed and boundless wealth ever executed; could we have the singing of angelic hosts; could we have the eloquence even of Gabriel, all would be too poor to set forth the glory of Jesus. All heaven adores Him—the Child of the manger, the Ancient of days—the Son of Mary, the Son of God. But if we had all these, and had not God, we should be poor indeed. I would rather preach in an open field, or in a barn, with God, than in the most majestic cathedral without His presence and power. Come, O Thou mighty God, and abide with us! As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so pant our souls after Thee, O God!

THE SECOND PREREQUISITE.

2. The text suggests the next great need of the Church—a ministry clothed with salvation. Hebrew scholars tell us that this should be, "Let Thy priests clothe with salvation." But to clothe others they must themselves be clothed. Each thought implies the other. We need a ministry born of God. Those who are to tell others

the way must themselves know the way. Baptists above all others have insisted upon a regenerated Church. This is our distinguishing characteristic. We never can say, as do the Standards of one great denomination, "believers and their children" are members of the Church. We shall seldom have unconverted ministers if we continue to insist on a regenerated Church. How gloriously our fathers stood for this truth! Their faithfulness saved us from many forms of heresy in this country into which others fell, with their "half-way covenants" and other compromises between the world and the Church.

Our ministers need the highest possible culture. Did a minister know as much of medicine, of law, and of science as the foremost men in these departments of knowledge, he could use all his learning in telling the wondrous story of redemption. But most of all he would need to be taught the grace of God at the feet of Jesus. Paul had many reasons for his bold and intelligent determination not to know anything among the Corinthians save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. He knew the fondness of the Greeks for subtle and speculative disquisitions. He knew that they loved a finished rhetoric and a graceful elocution. He knew that they would despise his theme. But he was a student of life and history. He was a cosmopolitan man. He knew that the cross was the pivot of the world's life. He had built his studio beneath that cross. But his best reason for the choice of this theme was that he had experienced in his own heart the power of the crucified Christ. Not at the feet of Gamaliel, not among the treasures of Greek literature, but at the cross had he studied his noblest lessons. Almighty grace had subdued his soul; like the walls of Jericho its ramparts fell before the mighty power of God. The power which could subdue him could

soften the hardest heart. His theme compels our admiration for the clearness of his intellect as well as for the tenderness of his heart. Every minister must have the argument of a personal experience of saving grace. This made the healed Bartimeus and the recovered maniac manifestations of divine power. They did not need arguments; they were themselves arguments.

No slavery is so slavish as the preaching of the Gospel by a man who is a stranger to its power in his own heart. For years the great Chalmers was such a slave. His sermons were magnificent essays, but they had no spiritual life and power. God met him. From the chamber in which he bowed under a sense of his sins and in communion with his God, he came forth a new creature in Christ Jesus. The light of heaven was in his face; a new eloquence was on his tongue; the peace of God was in his heart. The love of Christ glowed in his sermons. Men marvelled at the secret of his power. How Peter could preach when he was filled with the Holy Ghost! Once a servant-maid frightened him. Now he faces thousands. Do not be afraid to trust him. God has endued, clothed him with power. For that he waited at Jerusalem. He charges his hearers with the most awful of crimes. The arrow pierces their hearts. Slain sinners are all about him. Mercy is proclaimed. Three thousand are born in a day. He preaches again. The second sermon results in the conversion of five thousand. He preaches the third time; the place is shaken; the narrator abandons the count, but speaks of the multitude that believed. Shall such scenes be witnessed again? Who dare say No? Who shall limit the power of the Almighty? Oh for pentecostal power to-day!

Ministers need also the earnestness born of intense conviction of the truth of God's Word. Doubt is death

to power. The apostles could say, "We believe and therefore speak." Some preachers virtually say, "We doubt;" and their congregations might add, "and therefore cannot preach." No man has a right to preach his doubts. Let him tell his doubts, if he has any, to God; let him tell his truths, if he has any, to men. It is what we know, not what we do not know, that we are to preach. If we were to preach from our ignorance rather than from our knowledge, some of us would have an inexhaustible theme. When men pick up at second hand theories of the Bible which have been discarded by all true scholars even in the land of their birth, and rush into the pulpit with these unverified theories, they pervert the pulpit and degrade the ministry. In no way can some men do so large a business with the amount of intellectual capital possessed as by assailing established opinions and cherished beliefs. The destructive critic can make a great noise for a little time with a small amount of shallow scholarship. It is easy to destroy; it requires only the lowest order of talent. A child or an idiot can destroy in an hour with a knife or a hammer more of the results of genius than a Raphael or an Angelo could produce in a lifetime. But a gallery of paintings or a hall of statuary is not the best place for a child or an idiot with a knife or a hammer. It is pitiful to see men rushing into speech or print with their undigested thinking and unverified theorizing. We are not afraid of truth; but we have a right to know that it is truth. That men may preach mightily they must believe heartily. Doubt cuts the sinews of power. To get a grip on men you must first get a grip on God. Away with human nostrums! We want the old Gospel—old as eternity, and new as the last sunbeam which has kissed your cheek. Nothing but the bread of heaven can feed

the famishing soul. Nothing but the water of life can quench its burning thirst. Nothing but the peace of God can still the heart's wild throbbing. Nothing but the blessed balm of Gilead can heal the bleeding wounds of sin-sick souls. Oh sweet story of Jesus! It is heaven on earth to tell it.

Ministers need also the constraining power of Christ's love. We need the "blood earnestness" which Dr. Mason said was Dr. Chalmers's secret of power. The seraphic Summerfield, just before his death, speaking of his recovery, said: "Oh, if I might be raised again, how I would preach! I have taken a look into eternity." Think of Allein, of whom it is said, that "he was insatiably greedy for the conversion of souls;" of Matthew Henry, who said, "I would think it a greater happiness to gain one soul to Christ, than mountains of silver and gold to myself;" of Doddridge, who said, "I long for the conversion of souls more than for anything besides. I could not only labor for it, but die for it with pleasure;" of John Knox, who broke the stillness of the night with his thrice-repeated cry, "O Lord, give me Scotland, or I die." God gave him Scotland. No wonder that Queen Mary "feared the prayers of John Knox more than an army of ten thousand men." A passion for souls gives a man irresistible power. The Chinese convert was right when he said, "We want men with hot hearts to tell us of the love of Christ." Oh, friends, all about us are souls in sin and death; we may hear their death-knell sounding. Men and women there are without God and without hope—men and women soon to stand at the judgment-seat of Christ. O God, help us to cry unto Thee day and night for their rescue! "Let Thy priests be clothed to-day with salvation!"

THE THIRD PREREQUISITE.

3. The text suggests the next prerequisite—Church members delighting in the Word and work of God. A praying church is the bulwark of the pulpit; a laboring church is the right arm of the pulpit. A dead church has been the death of many a pulpit. When Napoleon invaded Egypt, we are told that he encountered a force protected by a mud fort. He strove in vain to reduce it. Had it been rock he could have shivered it; had it been wood, he could have burned it. But it was mud. As he fired upon it its powers of resistance were increased rather than diminished. A cold, dead church is a mud fort around the hearts of unconverted sinners. Some of you may remember Mr. Spurgeon's remarks about dead churches. He says: "Have you read 'The Ancient Mariner?' I daresay you thought it one of the strangest imaginations ever put together . . . dead men pulling the rope, dead men steering. But do you know that I have lived to see that time? I have seen a dead man in the pulpit, a dead man as deacon, a dead man handling the plate, and dead men sitting to hear." No doubt Mr. Spurgeon is right. Let us beware lest we be the dead men. Such a church excites the contempt of the world and the merriment of hell.

The text teaches us what a church should be. It should be holy. Its members are called saints. We are too apt to give a few distinguished Christians a monopoly of the name. It belongs to all who are truly the Lord's. In that wonderful spiritual ladder—a ladder more glorious than that which Jacob saw—let down for us in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians, we see what God would have us be. It comes from the heart of God to the earth. Its first round from the earth is *forgive-*

ness. Its next *redemption;* its next *accepted* in the Beloved; its next *adoption;* the next is *blameless;* the last is *holy.* Sweet and precious thoughts cluster about this ascent. There is divine wisdom in the order. The upper end rests upon the eternal purpose of God. Are we aiming to be holy? Do we thirst after righteousness? It should mean much that a man is a member of Christ's Church. Is the line between the world and the Church deep and wide? Do men take knowledge of you, my beloved Church, that you have been with Jesus? Do you show in word and act that you are Christ's? Not stone and wood alone would we this day dedicate to Almighty God; but ourselves, body, soul, and spirit, living temples for the living God.

Christians should rejoice in goodness. This is not simply our privilege; it is duty. We do not bend as slaves under the lash of duty; we stand erect as freemen in "the joy of the Lord." A sad Christian misrepresents the religion of Jesus. Religion has elements of sorrow. All deep life has. But it has glittering heights of joy. We may understand the blessed paradox of Paul. "As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing." "Rejoice evermore," he says; "and again I say, Rejoice." Christ was "a Man of sorrows," yet He was "anointed with the oil of gladness." No Christian life can be strong, manly, beautiful, where this joy is absent; for "the joy of the Lord is your strength." This truth illustrates profound philosophical principles.

Something of this joy fills our hearts on this blessed morning. We see in this completed house the result of our prayers, tears, and labors. A sense of God's goodness fills our hearts. What are we that we should offer after this sort unto God? I congratulate the trustees. Their faithful labor is worthy of all praise. I congratu-

late the architect. He has achieved a great success. I thank all the contributors for what they have laid on God's altar. May the glory of this latter house be greater than the former! Here and now we lay ourselves anew on God's altar, while there goes up from every heart the prayer, "Arise, O Lord God, into Thy resting-place. We beseech Thee, send now prosperity; and to Thy name shall be the glory forever. Amen."

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